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THE  
VICTORIA CROSS  
IN  
AFGHANISTAN,

AND ON THE FRONTIERS OF INDIA.

DURING THE YEARS 1877, 1878, 1879 & 1880.

HOW IT WAS WON.



RELATED BY

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"DARING DEEDS AFLOAT; ROYAL NAVY;" "GALLANT SEPOYS AND  
SOWARS;" "THE VICTORIA CROSS IN ZULULAND," &C.

London:

DEAN & SON, 160A, FLEET STREET, E.C.



TO THE OFFICERS,  
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, TROOPERS AND PRIVATES,  
OF THE BRITISH FORCES, EUROPEAN AND NATIVE,  
WHICH TOOK PART IN THE CAMPAIGN OF AFGHANISTAN  
DURING 1878 TO 1880,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS WITH RESPECT INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

*London, January 1st, 1882.*





# MAP OF AFGHANISTAN,

SHEWING THE

*March of British Forces, and of*

*Ayoub Khan from Herat.*





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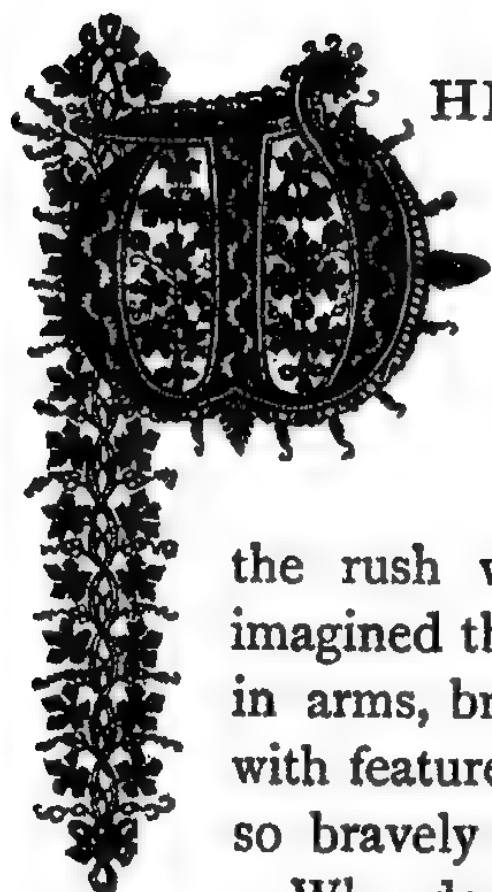
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# PREFACE.

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WHILE writing the episodes of warfare which in this little work I have inadequately endeavoured to depict, I have in spirit been with those splendid officers and soldiers who took their part in the achievements related. Mentally I have been in the rush which has gained the fight. I have imagined that I stood with my gallant companions in arms, breathless from prolonged exertion, yet with features triumphant, upon the field of battle so bravely and so hardly won.

Why does the British soldier fight so well?—Does he do so for his pay?—are questions which have been asked of me many times.

All soldiers taught by discipline combat more or less well, owing to the obedience which this discipline inculcates, and to a certain degree of innate courage within them.

But why the British soldier stands before all those of the rest of the world in superlative qualities of bravery and endurance, is owing to the possession of a tenacity of purpose which is natural to his character, when once he takes upon himself to carry out an ordered duty; added to this, he has a cool firmness in the midst of the supremest danger, that causes him to regard his own life as of little value when the credit of his regiment and country demands his utmost effort on their behalf.

From personal experience, I assert that the *well-trained* British soldier has the highest sense of honour for his country and for the regiment to which he belongs, and will

not turn from that country's enemies, unless by order. To this rule there are no exceptions.

Although I include officer, non-commissioned officer, and private in this sense, I hope these two latter ranks of the British army will not deem me invidious, if for one moment I separate those to whom they look for a lead in the hour of battle, or for an example in the moment of peril.

It was my good fortune to be brought up, and to reside for more than twenty years at one of this country's great military colleges. For all these years I had ample opportunities to watch the training for British officers, and I say it is such, that the young English officer may become a brave, a high-minded, and an honourable gentleman educated to the profession of arms; and that he is made to thoroughly understand it is to him and his example, the men he is to command look for everything which goes to make the British soldier.

How well all this teaching works gallant deeds and honourable actions which make their mark upon historic pages, let the records of the Victoria Cross say.

The writer regrets his inability to do full justice to the actions which his pen has tried to portray. The British officer and soldier cares not, as a rule, to have his doings trumpeted about from place to place, and rather prefers, in his modest way, that they should speak for themselves; and if a generous nation will simply recognize him as having done his duty, he rests content—and, encouraged by a meed of praise, is incited to brighter efforts.

In the aggregate, the significance which deeds of bravery have in the eyes of the world, cannot be over-rated. Such deeds teach nation to respect nation. They add to a country's honour and renown.

It may perhaps be, that from associations, I have the

more closely identified myself with the acts of those concerning whom I have written with so much real pleasure, yet not unmingled with pain; for I have had to record the way some of those whom the God of battles has removed from the sphere of their usefulness, gave their lives for their country.

Owing to my young life being spent as it was, I knew many—very many, of those who took part in the magnificent events of war which occurred during the Crimean campaign, the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan and other wars of our time.

Remembering them in their youth as fine young men, with all the buoyancy of spirit and the fire of early manhood, how many now remain? But few. Numbers lay at rest in the English Cemetery on the heights above Sevastopol. Some are beneath the battle fields of India, Afghanistan, and Africa; others below the peaceful turf in our distant colonies. Of those who are now alive, all have distinguished themselves; most of them in foreign climes, and in the military service of their country. Some hold high posts of trust at home. All have well earned the nation's approbation.

The study of the lives of all distinguished men, shows that in every occupation, perseverance and discipline will form the youth into the man of mark in his generation, and cause his deeds to be handed down as examples for future guidance.

The accuracy of the facts and incidents herein related can be vouched for, since they have been taken from public despatches and official gazettes. An endeavour has been made to lighten the dry and formal details contained in these documents, while strictly adhering to the truth of circumstances.

W. J. ELLIOTT.

As the light grain disperses in the air,  
Borne by the winnowing of the gales around,  
Thus fly the vanquished, in their wild despair  
Chased, severed, scattered, o'er the ample ground.  
But mightier bands, that lay in ambush there,  
Burst on their flight—and hark ! the deepening sound  
Of fierce pursuit !—still nearer and more near,  
The rush of war steeds trampling on the rear.

\* \* \* \* \*

The day is won !—they fall—disarmed they yield,  
Low at the conqueror's feet all suppliant lying !  
'Midst shouts of victory pealing o'er the field,  
Ah ! who may hear the murmurs of the dying ?  
Haste ! let the tale of triumph be revealed—  
E'en now the courier to his steed is flying ;  
He spurs—he speeds—with tidings of the day  
To rouse up cities in his lightning way.

MANZONI.



# The Victoria Cross in Afghanistan.

## CHAPTER I.

### CAPTAIN COOK'S STRUGGLE WITH THE DURANEE.

THE PEIWAR KOTAL—THE VIDETTES AND PICQUETS IN WATCH—THE SPIN KOTAL—THE RECONNAISSANCE BY SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS—THE SECRET MARCH—CAPTAIN COOK SAVES THE LIFE OF MAJOR GALBRAITH—THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE—THE STOCKADES OF THE SPIN KOTAL CALLANTLY CARRIED BY THE 78TH HIGHLANDERS—THE FIGHT ACROSS THE RIDGE TOWARDS THE PEIWAR KOTAL PASS—GENERAL COBBE SHOT—THE AFGHANS TAKEN IN FLANK—THE RETREAT OF THE AFGHANS AND CAPTURE OF THE PASS—CAPTAIN COOK WOUNDED AT KABUL—HIS DEATH.



AN Indian sun was just within an hour of its disappearance for the day behind a high mountain ridge which runs across the termination of an undulating valley, bounded in the distance on either side by a range of hilly country, as a group of horsemen could be seen, on the evening of the last day of November, 1878, standing motionless close to a small clump of low trees



intermingled with underwood, situated about half a mile from the base of the ridge and upwards of a mile from the southernmost side of the valley.

One of these horsemen was slightly in advance of the remainder. He had thrown the reins of his horse's bridle upon the neck of the animal, and was in the act of looking through a powerful field-glass, which he had taken from a pouch that now hung suspended by his right side from a belt across his left shoulder.

None of this group of horsemen spoke, but all regarded with searching eyes the low ground at the foot of the range of mountains which towered high above them. Their looks seemed intently fixed upon a broad cleft in the heights in their front, which, open and wide at the top, ran down on either side to a narrow opening near its base.

This opening in the precipitous mountain range was in shape like an irregular V, and could be seen extending back clear through the ridge. Although the passage through was somewhat upwards to a certain point, from this it appeared to descend until it reached the opposite side of the mountain and passed into another valley beyond.

That a way existed through the cleft was evident, for a zigzag road could be observed winding in and out of the various parts of the approaches to the opening and passing up to its higher parts, finally disappearing past some belts of pines which grew upon the rugged sides of the path and up the rough sides of the cleft.

A short distance to the rear of the horsemen was an escort of cavalry, and to their left could be seen a solitary mounted soldier standing motionless upon a low hill, and with his horse's head, like the others, turned towards the frowning ridge which barred the western end of the valley in which he stood. To the left of this mounted soldier, yet at a considerable distance from him, was another, and, dimly



observed in the distance, yet another. To the right, dotting each apex of a hill or the upper part of some rising ground, and upon a line of some two miles or more in extent, similar troopers could be perceived. The white and red flags at the head of their long taper lances gently fluttered as the light breeze moved their folds. The bearers of the lances sat still, silent, and watchful of all that passed from the base to the summit of the pine-clad surface of the sharply rising mountain in their front.

About six or seven hundred yards to the rear of these solitary lancers were grouped small parties of foot-soldiers, for the most part clad in a red-coloured uniform, some of whom were lying down in rest; others were leaning upon their rifles. About three or four hundred yards in front of these groups, and towards the solitary lancers, were single foot soldiers, who were detached as sentries from the groups behind them, and who could be clearly seen at intervals walking slowly up and down their beat, or standing with their faces towards the mountain ridge, in close observation of its almost upright surface. Some of these single sentries were in hollow ways, others were on slightly rising ground.

The solitary lancers were the videttes, the single foot-soldiers and the groups were the sentries and the picquets of a small British army which was encamped at about a mile and a half from the foot of the mountain range that ran across the termination of a wide valley through which this army had advanced, and then saw for the first time the tremendous obstacle which seemed to stop its further progress.

The centre of the group of horsemen by the clump of trees looked with his field-glass long and earnestly over the face of the mountain's side from its right to its left. His particular attention, however, appeared to be directed towards the cleft, or rugged opening, just

opposite to where he stood. He and his party were evidently observed by the occupants of the pass and of



GENERAL SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS, V.C., G.C.B.

*By J. Craddock, India.*

the low ground at its base, for occasionally a white puff of smoke suddenly sprang from amongst the pines which

grew in profusion up its sides, or from one or other of its numerous rocky ledges. A loud hum, as of a large wasp in rapid wing past the horsemen, followed the sight of the white puff of smoke in the hill-side. The sound was that of the flight of a leaden bullet from a rifle. Once or twice the earth near the horsemen was dashed up by one of these bullets, as if from the kick of a shod foot. At this, a short word from the horseman in front, and the whole group passed a few yards to the right or to the left, and the observation of the mountain's side was coolly and calmly continued.

As the foremost horseman became a central figure in English history by what he was at this time engaged upon, and as he is now, by other and perhaps more brilliant achievements which followed this episode, a man of mark amongst men, and one to whom the English nation has learned to look in times of difficulty and danger, he must be somewhat accurately described.

Mounted upon a splendid bay Arab charger, this man sat his horse firmly, and with that upright carriage to which the English cavalry or artillery soldier is habitually trained. He was in stature a little below the middle height, and of rather slight yet wiry build. His frame seemed nevertheless strongly knit, and capable of enduring much physical fatigue. His face was bronzed by continual exposure to an Indian sun. The peak of a white helmet shaded a wide and expansive forehead. Beneath well-defined eyebrows were keen and searching blue eyes. His features, spare looking, were nevertheless regular. A brown moustache shaded a mouth of singular firmness of expression, and met somewhat bushy whiskers which were shaved away in line with the corners of his mouth. He was clad in a braided uniform coat of dark-blue cloth, with nether garments of the same hue and texture ending just below the knee, and

having down their outer seams a broad stripe of gold lace ; a pair of military boots of Hessian pattern with spurs of the hunting type, a military waist belt having dependent from it an ivory-handled sword, completed his costume.

He seemed of a somewhat silent and reticent character. His manner was firm and self-reliant. He appeared to be a man who took pains to form a decision, which once made upon grounds which to his mind were satisfactory, would be promptly carried into effect. The greater portion of this officer's life had evidently been spent in the exercise of the profession of arms, for a thin line of ribbons ran across his left breast, above which could be seen, suspended by another single ribbon, a bronze cross, which showed that he had won the highest prize of the soldier, the Victoria Order of Valour.

This man was by every characteristic the one to whom those whom he commanded could look with sureness of direction, and follow with confidence as to result.

Such was Major-General, now, General Sir Frederick Roberts, V.C. and G.C.B.

The small army which he commanded, and which was now encamped some two thousand yards from the foot of the ridge he was so closely examining, consisted of just over three thousand officers and men all told. This was the British force which was acting as the centre of the three columns then on the duty of carrying out the invasion of Afghanistan, and the advance upon Kandahar and Kabul.

The valley chosen as the route of the centre column was that known as the Khurum Valley. The pass or cleft through the mass of rugged mountainous ridge that stopped the end of this valley, and which General Roberts was in the act of reconnoitring, was the Peiwar Kotal Pass.

The ridge which barred all further advance out of the broad and undulating Khurum Valley extended to a





length of over four miles. Looking towards this ridge, it commenced on the left from some commanding hills which overlooked the southern end of the valley, and terminated in some lower ground close to the valley's northern side.

Two regular roads ran through the Khurum Valley up to the ridge of mountains. One led in a tortuous direction into the Peîwar Kotal, which was situated at about a mile from the southern side of the valley. The other road wound towards the Spin Gawai Kotal, about three miles to the right of the Peîwar.

Several by-paths crossed the range in various directions ; but these were narrow ; they were utterly impracticable for the passage of troops, being over rugged ground and difficult of access.

The most formidable of the two Kotals was the Peîwar. This was a narrow precipitous depression in the mountain ridge, commanded on either of its sides by high pine-clad steps rising one above the other. The approach to the Peîwar Kotal from the Khurum Valley was up a road which followed a course that caused it to run first to the right, then to the left, according to the nature of the ground.

The ridge upon which the Peîwar Kotal was situated seemed as if, at its southern end, some mighty upheaval of nature had split this termination of the mountain chain from its summit to its base, and caused fragments of the cleft to be scattered into the narrow point below. The same convulsion appeared to have cracked the ridge across in yet another place beyond. Huge masses of earth and stone had fallen and partially choked up the narrow space at the bottom of each opening.

These masses of earth were now overgrown with tall pines ; the rugged blocks of stone were covered with verdure



which grew upon a thin stratum of soil. Between these ran the roads through the range.

The face of the ridge and the sloping sides of the Peîwar Kotal formed a military position of the most formidable nature. The front was broken up into ledges, one over the other, each being commanded by the one above it. Every point of the approach to the pass was exposed to the fire of guns and rifles from points of vantage. Breastworks of pine logs and pieces of rock had been placed at various spots to impede an advance and add to the strength of the defence. At the top of the ascent through the Kotal was a small plateau; this was again commanded by wooded heights, which rose on each side to an elevation of five hundred feet. On the western or opposite side of the mountain range, the ground gradually sloped by undulating ground into another broad and open valley. This was the Hariab Valley.

To the right, looking towards the Peîwar Kotal range, was another cleft which also led to the Hariab Valley. This pass was known as the Spin Gawai Kotal, to which a road led through the northern part of the Khurum Valley, but separated from that leading to the Peîwar by a low range of intervening hills.

\* \* \* \* \*

A long and searching examination of the whole position of the Peîwar Kotal at length seemed to convince General Roberts that the great preparations which the Afghans had evidently made, together with the difficulties connected with the condition of the approaches, precluded a direct attack upon the Kotal without an enormous sacrifice of life, which he could ill afford. It was apparent to him that all the advantages, both natural and artificial, lay with the Afghans. Not alone a repulse, but even the risk of a repulse, must not be run.

The force with which he had to carry this strong position



was small in comparison to the nature of the undertaking necessary to be carried out ; therefore, as usual, the paucity of numbers had to be made up by the courage, the skill, and the endurance of all engaged.

The Afghans General Roberts had to attack, were not the Afghans of former wars. They were men of large stature, hardy, and of great physical strength. They were now well armed with rifles, with good cannon, and had an abundant supply of ammunition ; many of their officers were men of considerable ability in warfare.

With his little army of just over three thousand, the General had to overcome every obstacle, to fight his way to Kabul, and to subjugate the fierce and murderous tribes which lay in his path.

But neither General Roberts nor his gallant band of courageous followers shrank from the task with which they had been entrusted. An experienced, a resolute, a self-reliant leader was backed up by men determined to act upon his commands to the very letter. The heart of every man in that force beat high in the hope of distinguishing himself. Every thought was of duty and the honour of England before the eyes of all the world.

As the sun sank below the ridge, General Roberts replaced his field-glass in its pouch, gathered up his reins, and turned his horse's head. Scarcely a remark had passed from him. His companions, too, had been close observers of the strong position they had come to reconnoitre, and each had formed his own conclusions.

"I am confirmed in my opinion," said the General, as he turned to leave the spot, "that a front attack will get us a hot reception. I will now prepare my plans. Let each of my staff keep any opinions to himself that he may have formed from to-day's reconnaissance. I will soon make known my intentions respecting the attack upon the pass ;

in the meantime let the videttes and picquets keep a sharp look-out in their front, and report accordingly."

A staff officer near him noted the order, and then the whole trotted quickly back to the camp in their left rear, the cavalry escort following close behind.

A few days previous to that on which this tale opens, General Roberts and his little army had crossed the Afghan frontier, and had advanced along the Khurum Valley comparatively unmolested, and had now reached that spot at which the Afghan army had resolved to make its first determined stand. Its position had been well chosen. It relied upon the supposition that the main road—that of the Peîwar Kotal—would be taken by the advancing British, and it had made ample preparations for the Kotal's defence. In this supposition the Afghans were correct. The main road *was* chosen as the line of advance, and by this the British force progressed to the Peîwar Kotal. But the wily Afghans had not made so serious a provision for an attack by another method than that of a *direct* one. The Afghan force was well aware of the British mode of fighting and their stubborn courage; and felt sure that they would rush at the defences, and endeavour to carry them by storm. In this also the Afghans, to some extent, had formed a just conclusion, and had indeed well laid their plans to meet the coming storm, and for a terrible pursuit in case the British were repulsed.

The Afghans reckoned without their host, and knew not the ability or the character of the English leader. One portion of this character was secrecy, when such was necessary; and it was so, in a country in which the General was surrounded by truculent spies, or by camp followers; or if he had in his force one or more discontented native soldiers, who would desert and sell their information to the enemy.

General Roberts had reconnoitred the Peiwar Kotal a day or two before. He had previously observed its natural strength ; he had noticed the formidable obstacles prepared for his attack ; he had come to the conclusion to rest his force for a day or two, and then to deliver the assault in his own way ; and that way, he took very good care, should be only known to himself and to a chosen few whom he of necessity was compelled to make parties to his plans for the purpose of assisting him in their preparation. All were bound to secrecy ; all kept their mouths closed as to the matter in hand ; and all, as they saw the plans unfolded, felt confident of a brilliant triumph for the British arms. The whole of those in whom confidence was placed entered heartily into the plans, and all worked hard to have every detail in perfect readiness at the proper moment.

General Roberts resolved to make no direct attack upon the Peiwar Kotal with all his force, but determined that he would make it appear as if he was about to assail it from the front in the most resolute manner.

He had secretly caused the Spin Gawai Kotal to his right and all its neighbouring hills to be closely reconnoitred by two of his most experienced officers, Major Collett and Captain Carr. These gentlemen succeeded in reaching a point at a little over a mile from the entrance of the Spin Gawai, and obtained a good view of the whole of its approaches, and of the means the enemy had prepared for its defence. They found the road to the Kotal comparatively open, easy of access, and, although evidently prepared by the enemy for a stubborn resistance, the natural obstacles to an advance through the pass were not so surrounded by rugged crags and other positions from which a destructive fire could be poured down upon the attacking party.

The night of the 30th, and all the next day (Sunday),

were spent in active and secret preparation for a certain march, to be begun on the evening of this day.

But in the meantime, some additional arrivals of guns and troops were ostentatiously paraded in front of the Peîwar Kotal. Lines for batteries were openly marked out, and working parties commenced operations on them. The picquets and videttes were strengthened. Some cavalry were thrown forward, and everything was done to make it evident that a front attack upon the Peîwar was imminent.

On the evening of Sunday, the 1st of December, every British and native soldier fully believed that an assault upon the position was to be made on the following morning, and hopes ran high as to the result. Every man resolved to do his best to carry the pass or die in the attempt.

The ostentatious proceedings of the British in front of the Peîwar had the desired effect, for the Afghans pushed forward more troops to the mouth of the pass, and placed additional guns in position to command the approaches.

At ten o'clock at night General Roberts sent out a requisition for all commanding officers to come to his tent. A guard of British soldiers was formed around it to keep off intruders or spies. Then he explained to the officers his plan of attack.

This was, that all his force, with the exception of about 850 men, should march forward some distance, turn to the right, and gain the road leading to the Spin Gawai Kotal; then bear towards the Kotal, assail it, force it, and turn to the left across the ridge towards the Peîwar, and thus turn that position and fall upon the left flank and rear of the enemy who occupied that pass. Further, that Brigadier-General Cobbe, who was to be left in command of the 850 men, should attack the Peîwar so soon as he knew that the assault upon the Spin Gawai Kotal was in course of success,

and so to keep the enemy well employed while the advance towards them across the ridge was in progress.

The assembly was quietly ordered, *not sounded*, shortly after the General had explained his plans. In silence the troops fell in, for all were well aware that serious work was before them, and each knew not if he should ever see the sunset of another day ; but no man's heart quailed. In every eye there was resolution, in every demeanour there was firmness.

General Roberts mounted his horse. His staff was already in waiting. He then moved quietly off to the head of the troops, and saw that the proper direction was taken. He assumed the personal command of the whole body which composed the column for the forcing of the Spin Gawai, and the turning of the Peîwar Kotal.

At first the troops as arranged marched forward towards the village of Peîwar, as if with the intention of taking up a position to deliver the assault upon the Kotal the next morning. Soon after eleven o'clock they reached the village, close to which ran, nearly along the whole length of the face of the mountain ridge, a deep nullah, or dry bed of a river that in the rainy season was a rushing, foaming torrent. Down into the bottom of the nullah were the troops ordered ; they then received instructions to bear to the right up the nullah.

A toilsome and weary march followed, for the bed of the watercourse was nothing but a mass of loose and broken stones, heaped into ridges and furrowed out into deep hollow ways by the action of the water. Wondering much at so strange a march, yet confident that they were being led aright, the officers and men struggled on encouraging each other by many a quiet remark.

The night was fine, but bitterly cold. The columns lengthened out somewhat as the tired men pressed on.



Then General Roberts found it expedient to change the order of lead. He directed the head of the column to be formed of the 5th Goorkhas, one company of the 78th Highlanders, and the 20th Punjaub Infantry. No rest could be given, as the march was longer and the difficulties greater than had been anticipated; but about six o'clock in the morning of the 2nd, the head of the column reached the foot of the Spin Gawai Kotal, and turned to the left into its approach.

Day was fast breaking as the columns emerged from the bed of the nullah and reached the road leading into the Kotal. By an oversight which saved many a British soldier's life, the enemy had neglected to place a picquet in the nullah, never anticipating such a march or any attack from its direction. So far, therefore, the British advance was unobserved.

Suddenly the sound of two musket-shots rang out upon the still morning's air. They came from two look-outs who had just seen the front men in the act of approaching the entrance to the pass.

The advanced guard of the 5th Goorkhas was leading in formation of fours.

A cheer in response to the shots.

"Front form company!" shouted Major Fitzhugh, their commander. With a rapid run the gallant Goorkhas formed up their company line, and with a wild shout, led by Major Fitzhugh and Captain Cook, they dashed at once at a barricade which they saw at a distance of fifty yards in their front.

A close volley from behind this breastwork, the sight of a few falling men, the sound of rushing feet over the ground for a moment; in the next, the company was swarming over the barricade, and were amongst the Afghans who were defending it.







Then a terrible hand-to-hand conflict took place ; a fearful fight ensued, for the Afghans were strong and determined men. Major Fitzhugh and Captain Cook were amongst the first over the obstacle, and could be seen cutting right and left, cheering loudly, and calling to their men "to come on." Numbers of their Goorkhas, hearing the shout, sprang over the barricade and rushed eagerly into the fray.

Now could be seen a mass of struggling men. Swords flashed in the early light as they were wielded over the heads of combatants, to descend, to kill or to wound. Bayonets gleamed as they were brought down to the charge and thrust with deadly effect. Streams of flame rushed from rifle barrels as they were fired with point-blank aim. Shouts, wild "hurrahs !" and cries from the suddenly wounded, sounded high above the clashing of steel and rattling noise of musketry.

Many of the remainder of the 5th Goorkhas spread themselves up the slopes amongst the pines, the underwood, and over the boulders on each side of the obstacle, and searched with their fire the flank and rear of the fiercely defending Afghans.

A final rush from the Goorkhas within the barricade, and the Afghans wavered ; some fell back, others began to run towards another stockade in rear. The 78th Highlanders came up, and with a cheer sprang over the logs and stones which formed the barricade, and then joined in the combat.

Amongst these gallant soldiers was Major Galbraith, the Assistant Adjutant-General. A powerful Duranee Afghan rushed at him bayonet at the charge. The Major parried the Afghan's murderous thrust. The man stepped back, brought his rifle to the shoulder, and aimed at the officer's heart. A loud shout ! The Afghan hesitated for a moment, and looked from whence it came. His pause was

fatal to him. Another British officer had run close up at the sight, and was upon the Afghan in an instant. The shout came from this officer. The Afghan's rifle was struck up and a sword blow was aimed at his head. The Afghan sprang back and escaped the cut, but he dashed the point of his fixed bayonet full at the officer's breast; it was, quick as lightning, thrust aside. Again was the musket aimed, but this time at the new-comer's head; Captain J. Cook—for such was his name, and he it was who had led the charge over the barricade—seized the muzzle of the weapon and gave point with his sword; but the powerful Duranee gripped the Captain's arm, and then ensued a desperate struggle, for Major Galbraith had been hurried forward in the fight by others from behind.

The Afghan and the British officer made tremendous efforts to release their weapons from each other's hold; but each was powerful, and each knew well that if either sword or musket were relinquished, a life would pay the forfeit.

Captain Cook threw himself upon the Duranee with a mighty strength, grasped him by the throat with his left hand, and bore him to the ground.

Both fell, and over and over they fiercely rolled in the terrible struggle for mastery over death. The Afghan wrenched away the hand which held his throat, and made frantic efforts to bring the muzzle of his rifle to the Captain's body and to fire; but these efforts were frustrated. Swinging his frame over, and in his awful fierceness, the Afghan actually seized his opponent's sword-arm in his teeth, pinned it to the ground with the tenacity of an English bull-dog, and shortened his musket to strike the bayonet into the Captain's body. He was observed, for a little Goorkha suddenly turned and saw the danger of his leader; he ran up quickly, pointed his rifle, and fired. A bullet crashed

through the Afghan's skull ; his hands relaxed ; he rolled over, dead.

Then up rose the gallant Captain Cook, panting and exhausted with the fearful struggle for life. A few moments to lean upon the hilt of his sword to recover his breath, and once more he was at the head of his men and leading the charge to the stockade further up the pass.

One loud British cheer, and over this went the gallant Highlanders and Goorkhas. Again was there the same close conflict inside, for the Afghans made a stubborn fight. But pluck and stern determination prevailed. Nearly the whole of the Afghans here had to be dispatched with the bayonet and sword before the second barricade was in British possession.

This gained, once more did these splendid soldiers (for the Highlanders now took the lead) rush at yet another well-constructed obstacle, and carry it in the same brilliant manner. Then came up numbers of their supporting comrades. These spread themselves out amongst the hills and woods above the pass. General Roberts quickly arrived, and assumed the direction of the head of the attack. He commanded a still further forward movement, and then swept his force round to the left and over the broken summit of the ridge towards the Peiwar Kotal.

His officers and men now well understood by this time the reason of the secret and toilsome night march along the bed of the nullah, and pressed eagerly forward ; but the ground was intersected by gullies, by ravines, and was interspersed with dense woods of pine. The enemy, posted in many advantageous positions, made strenuous exertions to stop the advance, and resisted fiercely. Many British and native soldiers fell, but the rest drove all before them.

Slowly but surely point after point was gained. Cheer

after cheer rang out as the edge of the Peiwar Kotal was neared, and the enemy about to be taken in reverse.

But so soon as General Roberts saw that the success which his courageous soldiers had procured for him was certain, he sent an aide-de-camp to signal it to Brigadier-General Cobbe.

Away galloped the officer, accompanied by the signalling trooper, and out from the Spin Gawai Pass they rapidly emerged, and, turning to their right, they gained some high ground which looked towards the force waiting to attack the Peiwar. Soon the trooper, in seeming wildness, was seen waving to the right, to the left, above and below him, his little red and white flag with its short staff. He was visually signalling important information. A small party of horsemen in the distance observed him. Answering flags were quickly seen. He was understood.

Then began to move forward the force of General Cobbe. Streams of fire sprang out from the face of the mountain ridge about the Peiwar Kotal, and from the whole of its approaches.

The incessant boom of nearly thirty guns could be heard, as flash after flash told of their position. Round shot, shell, and grape shot whistled past the advancing troops, or struck the ground around them; but on moved the British. General Cobbe was soon wounded, with many more; but his command was assumed by Colonel Drew, 8th Regiment, who then bravely led the way.

The Afghans in the Peiwar heard with surprise the firing on their left towards the Spin Gawai, and threw out a force in that direction, which assisted in a stubborn resistance; but about noon Colonel Perkins, of the Royal Engineers, galloped forward and selected a position for two guns of a mountain battery, from which could be shelled the Peiwar Afghan camp. Two other guns were brought up to another

advantageous point. The four guns were worked with such energy and accuracy, that in a short time numbers of the tents were set on fire, and the camp was rendered quite untenable. And now the Afghans lost heart, for their flank was attacked, their rear was gained, and their retreat in danger of being cut off.

Their front resistance slackened. A retreat from the plateau in the centre of the pass commenced. This was communicated to those at the entrance, and soon a move backwards began, and a general flight to the rear along the Ali Khal road.

Now Colonel Drew and his men dashed forward. A last stand at the Peiwar was made by a force of Afghans who seemed resolved to fight to the very last. These were gallantly overcome. The Peiwar Kotal, as well as the Spin Kotal, with over twenty guns, were in the hands of the British force, and one of the most splendid of those achievements which were placed on the roll of gallant actions in Afghanistan was complete.

The moral effect upon the murderous and truculent Afghan population of the Khurum, the Hariab, and the neighbouring Khost Valley, was great, and led to the best results, for the *prestige* of the British arms went from hill to hill, from mountain to mountain, from valley to valley, and thus saved many valuable lives.

This deed of British arms will live in history as one of the brightest efforts of military skill. Its conception was excellent; its execution was brilliant.

Captain Cook, the hero of the fight, was recommended, and received the Victoria Cross for his splendid lead, and for the way he saved his brother officer's life.

He lived to share with his gallant regiment, the 5th Goorkhas, all the fighting up to and around Kabul, and which ended in the occupation of that city.



But it is with pain I have to say that in a combat which took place around the celebrated Sherpur lines, near Kabul,



CAPTAIN J. COOK, V.C.

on the 11th of December, 1879—just one year after his winning the Victoria Cross—this fine soldier (one of three

brothers who were engaged in the campaign) received a dangerous wound in the leg, from the effects of which he died five days after.

He was an officer well worthy of England's gratitude. His name was famous when he died, for his reputation had travelled thousands of miles home to England. His Queen and his country had honoured him by a well-merited and coveted recognition of the brilliant service he had rendered to both.

He departed from amongst his companions as he had lived—a gentleman, a brave man, and an English soldier. He passed away respected and regretted by his dusky native followers. He gave up his life esteemed and beloved by all in the British army who knew him. He died the death every good soldier wishes to die—a death upon the field of battle.

Captain Cook had deprived himself of some of his pay, by giving a small annual amount to a beloved sister, separated from him by thousands of miles.

Thought of amidst the hardships and dangers of war, in which he did his excellent duty, this sister was more than ever so, at the moment when he knew too well that he was about to give up his life for his country's service.

At that supreme moment he felt that his sister must lose the allowance which he had made to her, and his death would thus to her be a double loss. A brother he could not save to her, for his country's enemies had struck him off the roll of life; but the little income which he had provided, he could try to keep for her.

He wrote with his dying hand a letter to the Indian authorities, stating the facts, and requesting that they might be good enough to take into consideration the manner of his departure, and remember his services; and that they



would kindly continue the amount to his sister, who would otherwise so severely suffer by the loss of his life.

To the credit of these authorities, they granted from the Indian exchequer the small annual amount asked for by the dying man. The English public will be gratified to hear this, and to respect alike this proof of loving feeling in the British soldier towards a woman, and the judgment which prompted the authorities to grant his request.

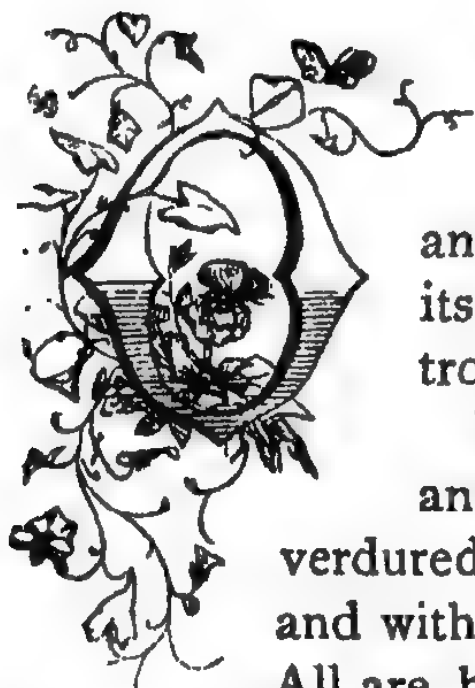




## CHAPTER II.

### LIEUTENANT HART SAVES THE LIFE OF A SOWAR.

THE PROVISION TRAIN—THE FRONT AND REAR GUARDS—  
THE NULLAH—THE ATTACK UPON THE REAR OF THE  
BAGGAGE TRAIN—LIEUTENANT HART RUSHES TO THE  
RESCUE—HE SAVES THE SOWAR—THE AFGHANS DEFEATED  
—THE MARCH OF THE TRAIN RESUMED.



NE of the most singular sights the eye can rest upon, is that of an Indian transport train of baggage, provisions, and munitions of war, as it proceeds with its accompanying escort or convoy of troops through an enemy's country.

Foremost of the train of men and animals, as it winds along the sparsely-verdured plain, are the patient camels, as, quietly and with the softest tread, they wend their way. All are heavily laden ; some are burdened with equipage of war, their swarthy turbaned attendants marching close at their sides ; others have sick or exhausted

men in thankful seat upon their elevated backs. To and fro, with a peculiar undulating motion, the burdens of these camels sway, as the enduring creatures pace with regular strides the sandy earth to which their expanding hoofs adapt themselves.

Following these, come the huge, unwieldy, but powerful elephants, with their mahouts seated upon their necks, "ankoosh" in hand, with which they remind the sagacious beasts that they must attend to orders. The points of the elephants' tusks are cut off short and faced with knobs of brass. The attendant mahouts, as they sit, drone out some Indian village ditty in cadences which rise and fall with the modulation of their voices. Often the mahouts stop their song and address a lengthy conversation to the intelligent brute over whom they have the command. The remarks of the mahouts seem to be understood by the elephants as they cautiously place their velvet-shod feet one after another to the ground. Their trunks, while the droning songs proceed, hang down in their front ; but now, as the mahouts speak to them, they lift their flexile appendages and turn them slowly from side to side. Frequently they curl them upwards ; often they snort out a sort of satisfied grunt. The elephants' loads, too, are heavy ; yet they seem to feel them not, for their strength is vast.

After the train of camels and elephants, each following the other in well-preserved order, come bullocks harnessed to waggons, pack horses, mules ; then more camels and elephants, followed again by a similar train of the other animals. Many of these latter draw laden carts, of Indian manufacture.

In one seemingly interminable line, the train winds along the bends of the open road or path, until it looks in the distance like some long snake as in silent stealth it creeps along the ground. On each side of this snake-like form

can be observed soldiers marching on foot or mounted on horses of light yet enduring build, with bayonet fixed or sword in hand. The bayonets glint and the swords flash in the sunlight as their possessors cover the ground with advancing footsteps.

Foremost of the train can be seen, some distance in front, a body of cavalry. From these occasionally one or two dash out, scour the plain to the right or to the left and ride to the point of a hill, or down into the bed of a hollow.

The foremost horsemen, who move forwards in compact order, are the advance guard of the convoy; those who gallop from point to point are its scouts to search the ground for an enemy who may lie concealed and ready to pounce down upon the convoy, cut off and murder stragglers, or rush upon the flanks of the train and endeavour to carry off some plunder.

Again, and at the extreme end of the line of men and animals, can be observed some cavalry, who are accompanied by foot soldiers. This is the rear guard to bring up all who leave the line and stray, to protect the end of the train, and to prevent any enemy who may have remained undiscovered amongst the numerous rocks or amidst the topes of trees and underwood, from sneaking out and killing those who, footsore or weary, lag behind.

All in this long train are watchful and on the alert, for it is proceeding through a country infested with an enemy treacherous, wary, and ruthless to the straggler; as his death is certain, should he be alone or unprotected.

It is the 31st of January, 1879. General Maude, in command of the second division of the Peshawur Field Force, had, by a series of brilliant engagements, swept away what remained of the regular Afghan army after the forcing of the Kyber Pass by General Browne. He had, too, partially cleared the country of numerous marauding tribes, which,

ever watchful for plunder and rapine, dogged the path of the forces advancing towards Kabul, intercepted convoys and attacked their guards.

A large train and convoy was on this day cautiously wending its way towards Dakka by the Kyber Pass road, with provisions for the advance of General Maude's little army, before whom the natives had fled, only to return as soon as he had passed.

The last day's march had arrived, and, so far, the convoy had been unmolested. The rear guard of horsemen had just reached the sloping bank of a wide nullah, barely dry, for the slightest of trickling streams could be seen threading its way in and out of the rough stones at its bottom. Some low hills rose on the opposite side of the nullah. At the foot of these hills, and close to the nullah's edge, there grew belts of pines and undergrowth. Huge boulders of stone were interspersed here and there, as if they had rolled down from the tops of the hills and had lodged at the edge of the nullah. This ground upon the further side of the watercourse was suspected of being dangerous. It would require searching well before the end of the convoy could be allowed to proceed in its passage into the road beyond, owing to the constant practice of the hillsmen to attack the rear baggage guard, and plunder and murder all stragglers.

A horseman from in front galloped back to the rear of the train and gave an order. Then a compact body of sowars under their officers went down into the nullah's bed, and disappeared. At the same moment some of the convoy guard of infantry ran forward some distance towards the edge of the river, crossed it, and extended themselves in skirmishing order beyond, and over some of the hills.

Scarcely had the horsemen descended to the bottom of the nullah and begun to search for enemies, and the infantry

spread themselves over the ground, than out rang the sound of a musket-shot ; this was quickly followed by the rattling fire of small arms. From almost every boulder, every piece of rock upon the farthest edge, and even from behind large stones in the river bed itself, streaks of fire came forth, accompanied by the whistling, humming sound of bullets in their flight of death. Scarcely an enemy could be seen. They were hidden behind the rocks. Only occasionally could be observed a turbaned head rise, as its owner pushed his rifle or matchlock over the surface of his concealment, aimed, and fired. Horses were struck, and rolled over in agony ; their riders, disengaging themselves and gaining their feet, grasped their carbines, took shelter, and returned the fire.

The enemy's aim was bad, as, so far, no man was seriously hurt, although several were slightly wounded. Some of the horsemen endeavoured to reach the topes of trees upon the opposite bank ; but a storm of bullets swept amongst them, rattled upon the stones near, and spattering particles of lead around.

At the first sound of firing, the skirmishing party of infantry searched the ground around with their bullets. A horseman of the rear guard, a brave sowar of the 15th Bengal Lancers, spurred forward his horse ; he nearly reached the top of the nullah, a bullet shot from the belt of trees struck him in the thigh, he reeled in his saddle, and fell to the earth.

An officer of the skirmishing party saw the sowar fall. He observed, as well, that the enemy were creeping forward towards the fallen man from their concealment. He gave a loud shout.

"Save the sowar !" cried he, as he waved his sword ; "help me, some of you, to rescue him, or he will be cut to pieces !"



Then he ran swiftly forward. Once more he called upon his soldiers to accompany him. Some of them followed the officer ; yet he was well in advance, and alone. He stood upon the brink of the nullah for a moment. Once more he cheered ; he saw the enemy hesitate, then he rushed down to the spot where lay the man he came to save. Now the men who had ran forward after the officer, reached and sprang down the sloping mass of stones to the assistance of the brave young man who had led the way.

He had reached the sowar. He stood over him, drew his pistol, and fired right and left at the murderous and advancing Afghans whose bullets pierced the air about them both.

“You have saved me, Sahib,” said the wounded sowar ; “they would have dispatched me in another moment.”

“Not quite saved yet,” returned the plucky young officer ; “but you will be soon, I hope, for here come some of our fellows.”

These soon reached the spot, and, amidst a shower of bullets, bravely helped the officer to carry the trooper up to the side of the nullah, and to bear him in safety to the convoy.

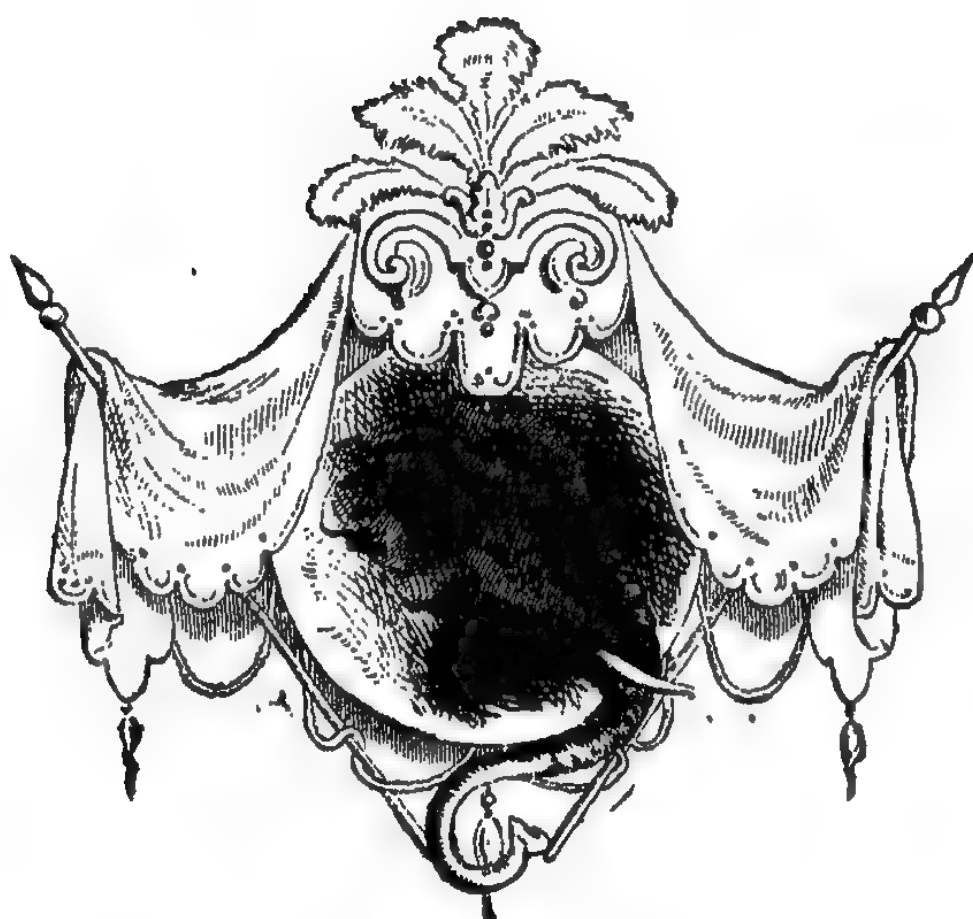
This done, the skirmishers, strongly reinforced, were quickly at work clearing their concealed enemies from the bed of the river and its opposite side ; but these, as usual, soon gave way, and bolted when vigorously attacked with coolness and determination.

The woods and river bed were well scoured after the skirmish. The advance and rear guards were carefully re-formed, and the train with its convoy, once more proceeded towards its destination.

The gallant young officer who had so bravely risked his life by taking the initiative in rescuing the wounded sowar while lying in the bed of the river surrounded by a body

of the enemy of unknown strength, and who had helped to carry him to a place of safety, was Lieutenant Reginald C. Hart, of the Royal Engineers.

For this act of humanity and bravery, this officer was recommended and received the Victoria Cross. He well deserved it.





## CHAPTER III.

### CAPTAIN LEACH'S ACTION WITH THE SHINWARRIS.

THE STREAMLET BEYOND THE KYBER—THE SURVEYING PARTY—THE SHINWARRIS LURK AROUND—THE RETIREMENT OF THE SURVEYING PARTY—THE RUSH OF THE SHINWARRIS—THE FIGHT—CAPTAIN LEACH RUSHES TO THE FRONT—THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE SHINWARRIS—THE SIKHS CARRY LIEUTENANT BARCLAY DOWN TO THE STREAMLET—CAPTAIN LEACH COVERS THEIR RETIREMENT—THE RIVULET IS REACHED—THE LAST EFFORT OF THE SHINWARRIS—THE FINAL STAND—CAPTAIN LEACH SUCCEEDS IN CROSSING THE STREAM.



LOSE to the village of Maidanak, in the Bazar Valley district of northern Afghanistan, and at the foot of a line of hilly yet fertile country that rises by successive gradations from the base of the valley through which winds a road from the Kyber Pass to Jellelabad, runs a shallow rivulet whose bed is formed of small rocks and stones rounded off by the continuous action of the stream around their surface. The water in this brook is clear as crystal, and glides swiftly by, circling and eddying amongst the stones as it meets with their resistance in its course.

As the edge of this running stream is approached, there is plainly heard the soft sound of the rippling fluid as it rushes along and is turned aside by the obstacles in its way.

Down almost to the water's edge are low trees and shrubs in profusion of growth, and of varied shades of colour. Nature's blending of harmonious hues of landscape is here in richest beauty.

Tall reeds with pendant offshoots, and broad-leaved water plants, are on the margin of the stream. The reeds gracefully bend their taper points as the gentle breeze sweeps over the surface of the river banks. They form a haunt for quail and wild fowl of many kinds.

Now the course of the stream is thrust well out into the broad valley by the spur of a hill, to again turn inwards and disappear from view; once more to be seen threading its way, and to seem like a streak of silvery light upon the bright green verdure which covers the face of nature.

A wayfarer, on looking from its margin, upon the limpid waters of this swiftly-flowing rivulet on the morning of the 17th of March, 1879, would have found its peaceful aspect, and the gentle sound of the softly rushing stream, in striking contrast with another sight, and with other sounds which in the distance above it met his eye or struck upon his ear; for, away upon the hills above could be observed a scene strangely at variance with that which lay at his feet. The sound of softly splashing water was intermingled with those of shouts and cries; and above these were heard the sharp and rapid crack of rifle and pistol shots, and the ping of bullets in flight. All these seemed to signify that men were in the act of deadly conflict one with another. The appearance of struggling, fighting men upon the hill-top, proved this to be the fact.

The rippling streamlet seemed to speak as with a voice

to the hills above in gentle reproach, for being the spot from which was disturbed a sight so pretty and sounds so peaceful in the valley below.

On the brow of one of the masses of rising ground which rose from the edge of the rivulet could be seen, on the morning in question, a knot of men on foot moving slowly down towards the stream. This knot of men in motion was protected by parties of others who occasionally faced about and fired a running volley from their rifles. Creeping stealthily from point to point could be observed bodies of fierce-looking mountaineers armed with long guns or matchlocks ; and, as these gained ground of vantage or cover, they aimed and fired at those who were evidently retreating and often standing at bay.

The knot of soldiers nearest the stream, yet at a considerable distance from it, was a party of the 45th Sikh Infantry, who were carrying one of their officers, Lieutenant Barclay, mortally wounded. Gently as possible and tenderly were the turbaned Sikhs bearing the stricken man along, as the bullets from their enemies hurtled around them or struck the earth at their feet. The face of the injured officer was deadly pale, for his life's blood was ebbing fast from the wound in his breast which had been made by the missile that had laid him low.

At the extreme rear, following at many yards behind the bearers, and directing the movements of the protecting party, could be seen an officer, whose stern and now fiercely flashing eyes, and whose resolute bearing, betokened a heart of indomitable firmness.

As the dark forms of the advancing foes could be seen, cat-like, springing forward to gain cover, and to fire at the party near him, this officer steadily pointed his pistol. A flash, and a report ! The sound of a conical bullet, as it struck the projecting point of a piece of rock, or cleft the air







INDIAN PROVISION TR



INDIAN PROVISION TRAIN H.



MARCH. (*See page 31.*)



THE NIGHT. (*See page 31.*)



dangerously close to a hidden Afghan, told him that he had better keep his distance, or death would be his portion. The officer often looked anxiously round towards the carriers, as if to ascertain their progress down the hill.

The small force of soldiers in the British service which was thus slowly retiring towards the pretty rivulet consisted of a party on survey duty with its escort. This was a military duty connected with ascertaining the nature of the ground for an advancement of a body of troops of different arms of the service, of military trains, convoys, and such like ; to find out proper roads, and to note their condition ; to record obstacles of every kind to the advance of a military force ; to note advantageous camping ground ; to ascertain and mark positions of strategical or tactical advantage, and other information necessary for the safety of all engaged.

This duty was in Afghanistan, always a very dangerous one. It was so in this case ; for the district in which this particular survey had to be made was peopled by an unfriendly body of Shinwarris, a tribe formed of numerous branches inhabiting the country almost from the debouch of the Kyber Pass to the Bazar Valley beyond Dakka. They were of a particularly truculent character, and never attacked the British troops unless in overwhelming numbers, and in the possession of excellent cover amongst the wooded and rocky hills, with which they were quite familiar.

The duty upon this occasion had been assigned to Captain Leach of the Royal Engineers, an excellent and experienced officer who had already done good service in the campaign. He was accompanied by a detachment of the 45th Sikh Infantry as his protecting escort.

Captain Leach had scarcely completed the work upon which he had been ordered, before he found that a large number of hostile Shinwarris had come out from the village

of Maidanak and gathered some distance in his front with threatening attitude ; and it was clear to him that so soon as these got sufficiently close to his party, they would rush upon and desperately attack him and his escort, or would get round to his rear and cut the whole party off from the way back to camp. It was therefore imperative to at once retreat in good order if the party was to be saved from disaster.

“We had better retire, Barclay,” said he, “for those rascally fellows are getting uncomfortably close. We shall find them about the rocks behind us if we do not, and we shall have a tough business to make our way back.”

“Very well,” returned the young Lieutenant ; “but we will just show them that they mustn’t come too near. I will put on a bold front for a few minutes, and then cautiously retire.”

“That is well,” said Captain Leach ; “it certainly won’t do to let them see that we are in any fear, or they would rush us at once.”

The Shinwarris were in greater force than either Captain Leach or Lieutenant Barclay imagined. So far, awed by the resolute bearing of the two officers and of the escort, they had only ventured to show themselves, send one or two shots from a distance, and gather in small parties in seeming readiness for an opportune attack. But no sooner did the party show signs of retiring than these Afghans became bolder. Some came out into the open and fired their pieces ; others ran forward, crouched behind cover, and got closer to the party. The enemy’s bullets began to whiz about the heads of the little British force. A couple of men were struck, and slightly wounded. The Sikh soldiers’ eyes gleamed with ominous fierceness ; they raised their rifles and grew impatient. The young Lieutenant noticed this.



“Half to skirmish, half to support!” said he. “Ressaldar to command the support.”

With this command he extended the front skirmishing party, and took them forward a short distance to check the fire of the advancing Shinwarris. He ordered his men to obtain as much cover as the ground afforded, and to fire with coolness and precision.

Rifle-shots now rang briskly out. Some of the Shinwarris were hit, for they could be seen recoiling from the fire and staggering away. But still bolder they grew as their numbers increased. They stole forward closer and closer.

The Lieutenant, a few yards in the rear of the centre man of his party, coolly and bravely directed the fire of his men. Suddenly, however, he reeled and fell to the ground. He was struck in the breast by a Shinwarris bullet !

A loud shout from a body of the enemy near, caused several of the Sikhs to look round. To their sorrow they saw that their officer was down. The supporting skirmishers observed their leader fall, and at once extended. Some rushed forward and surrounded the Lieutenant. Several of these lifted the wounded man and bore him rapidly backwards. Captain Leach ran quickly up to the front and at once assumed the direction of affairs.

To the Ressaldar (native officer of the Sikh detachment) he said—

“We must protect Mr. Barclay at all risks. We will retire by alternate files. I myself will always remain in front and direct the retreat; you take charge of the files.”

• “I will take care, Sahib, that the enemy shall not reach our leader,” was the reply.

Then slowly and with resolute aspect the whole began to go back, firing as they did so; but as the Shinwarris saw this, they rushed forward, united together in large groups, and began to press forward, shooting quickly.



Some distance backwards was traversed. The party neared the foot of the hills. Now the Shinwarris swarmed around. From every direction they seemed to approach. One large body prepared to rush down upon the Sikhs and their officers, and finish off the entire party. Captain Leach saw this, and made ready for the rush. He called in his skirmishers and formed his line.

"Fix bayonets! We must stop them, or they will be upon us!" he called out.

The enemy saw the Sikhs close upon their centre, and at once began to come swiftly on.

"Follow me and charge!" shouted Captain Leach.

The gallant Sikhs, led by the Captain, in one instant, with a run, were amongst the enemy.

The Shinwarris stood their ground well, for they were at least five to one in numbers. They received the shock of the charge and fired at close quarters. Many rolled over and fell, pierced through by the bayonets of the Sikhs; but others rushed up and joined in the conflict, and now ensued a terrible fight.

Captain Leach and his brave Sikhs found themselves in the centre of a mass of ferocious Afghans. Five of these at one moment attacked the Captain, all armed with long Afghan knives. He raised his pistol, in which still remained three charges; with rapid aim he fired, and his foremost antagonist fell dead. A second with a rush advanced, yet he too was stopped by a bullet in his body from the Captain's weapon, and rolled upon the ground wounded. Yet another, with flashing eyes, dashed upon the gallant officer. For the last time was the pistol raised and fired with fatal effect, for the Afghan fell dead at Captain Leach's feet. He at that moment turned his head—not a moment too soon: a flashing blade was in the act of descending with a downward stroke full upon his shoulder. His left arm, raised with

the speed of lightning to ward off the deadly blow, received and pushed aside the thrust ; but as the blade descended in its stroke of death, so did it cut with a terrible gash the arm which saved its owner's life ; and the Afghan, with a bayonet thrust through his body from a gallant Sikh, sank to the earth.

Now the British and native officers turned again and again, and whirled their sabres about. At every blow an enemy staggered back wounded, or fell to the ground, dead. The Sikhs plied their bayonets or shot fast from their rifles. Several of these hardy warriors were wounded, but they continued to fight on, and dealt death around them. But in the struggle a Sikh Havildar, with a spring from the ground, fell dead. A Shinwarris bullet had reached his brain.

Captain Leach gave a loud "hurrah !" It was answered by a war-shout from the gallant Sikhs. The enemy wavered and drew back. Captain Leach led a final rush, and then the assailing Shinwarris broke, ran for their lives, and once more sought the shelter of the rocks and trees about.

Then, and then only, did Captain Leach face about and once more commence to retire, followed by continuous shots from his skulking enemies.

During the fearful episode just related, the mortally-wounded Lieutenant Barclay had been carefully borne to the bottom of the hill and across the stream.

Now the foot of the hill was reached by the retiring detachment, and the following Shinwarris again gathered for a final charge ; but once more Captain Leach led the Sikhs at them with a run. The enemy stood for a minute or two ; then they scattered. With a parting but ill-directed volley from the Shinwarris, the British soldiers went across the rivulet into the open country in the valley ; for now some Guide cavalry, headed by Lieutenant Hamilton, who

had accompanied the party and retired along a neighbouring ridge, drew up for its protection, and rode down to the bed of the stream with swords drawn and intent to charge.

This was enough ; for the Shinwarris, seeing further pursuit would be punished by a determined cavalry onslaught, withdrew, firing long shots at the retreating survey party, who reached their camp without further injury.

Had it not been for the undaunted bravery and the splendid conduct of Captain Leach, the whole party would have been utterly annihilated, so large was the force of the enemy who surrounded it. His wound, though severe, healed well. He was recommended, and received the Victoria Cross as the reward for his bravery and resolution upon an occasion when nothing short of both could have saved all he commanded from a certain and a horrible fate ; for killed and wounded would alike have been mercilessly hacked to pieces by the bloodthirsty people who tried to encompass their destruction. This brave officer did excellent work all through the campaign, and was present at the disastrous battle of Maiwand, where his conduct for gallantry before the enemy, and in the conduct of the retreat to Kandahar, gained for him the distinction of being prominently mentioned in public dispatches.

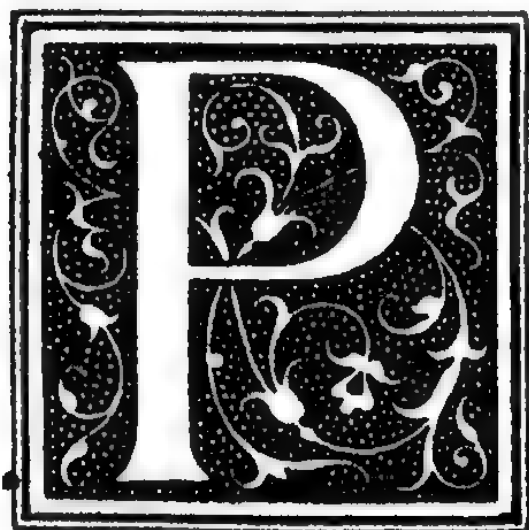




## CHAPTER IV.

### CAPTAIN CREAGH'S DEFENCE OF THE CEMETERY AT KAM DAKKA.

THE MOMUNDS AT DAKKA, NEAR JELLELABAD—THE VILLAGE OF KAM DAKKA—THE OUTPOST—THE MOMUNDS SHOW SIGNS OF HOSTILITY—PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR RECEPTION—THE NIGHT MARCH—KAM DAKKA OCCUPIED—ASSEMBLING OF THE MOMUNDS—CAPTAIN CREAGH RETIRES TO THE CEMETERY—ASSAULT BY THE MOMUNDS—DEFENCE OF THE CEMETERY—THE LAST RUSH—ARRIVAL OF THE RELIEF—DISPERSION AND SLAUGHTER OF THE MOMUNDS.



PEOPLE not acquainted with the characteristics of the inhabitants of the country about and for some distance beyond the Kyber Pass, would wonder how they managed to exist.

The description of their houses, and the almost utter absence of everything which would indicate a means by which the villagers procured a livelihood, would seem to imply that they owed their subsistence to other means than those which were afforded by husbandry or by work of any kind. Service for predatory warfare or robbery,

would strike one as the most probable by which the male inhabitants found the ways of living.

About fifteen miles beyond the celebrated Kyber Pass on a bend of the Kabul river, and on the direct road to the fortified city of Jellelabad, in Afghanistan, lies the town of Dakka ; and at nearly three miles beyond, is the native village of Kam Dakka.

This village, in common with many others in its neighbourhood, supplied its contribution towards making up one of the most extensive and arrogant tribes in all Afghanistan—that of the Momunds. It was a type of nearly all those villages which were situated around the country through which the traveller has to pass on his way from Peshawur to Kabul by Jellelabad, and consisted of a number of low detached houses, most of which were little better than hovels, yet having about them circular mud or stone loop-holed forts.

The principal portion of the British army which had forced the Kyber Pass had proceeded on its way to Jellelabad towards Kabul, having, as a matter of necessity, for the purpose of keeping open its line of communication with its base of operations at Peshawur, left detachments of troops at different parts of this line, whose special duty it was to hold the posts allotted to them ; to send out strong patrols towards the positions held by the British nearest to them, so that the roads might be kept clear for convoys and daks or native postmen, and at the same time to show by a resolute front that all rapine, violence, or robbery would be adequately punished.

The number of men who were on this detached and highly responsible duty of keeping open the line of communication was small in comparison with the character of the work they had to perform. The utmost vigilance was at all times required. Incessant activity in patrolling and

searching the neighbourhood of the principal roads was absolutely necessary. Swift and prompt action to resist any threatened attack upon the position had to be instantly taken, so that the truculent tribes should be made to understand that the British force in possession was wide awake, and did not intend to be trifled with.

The duty assigned to each commander of a post was harassing, and required all his energies of mind and body ; as any interruption or temporary possession of the line of road by the enemy might lead to a serious disaster to the main body in advance, by the capture of the munitions of war in progress of conveyance to the front which were necessary for its maintenance in the field, and afford the Afghans at the same time the means of continued attack upon the different posts along the line, which, passing through the Kyber, led past a difficult and dangerous country.

The different Afghan tribes around Dakka had been severely chastised by a force under General Maude and Brigadier-General Tytler, in December, 1878, and again in February, 1879, for treacherously firing upon and killing men belonging to parties which had been sent out in search of forage and supplies of food. Some of these fierce and warlike races had thought it advisable to send in their submission and remain quiet ; others had remained aloof and restless, yet afraid to attack openly, contenting themselves with isolated murders of single individuals who ventured to go too far beyond camp, or strayed from the path of a convoy.

• For some days previous to the 21st of April, 1879, the powerful and warlike Momunds had been showing signs of a disposition to seriously interfere with various parts of the line of communication which led through the Kyber, and even to threaten several of the posts held by the British for the purpose of keeping this line open.



The British had held the fortress and city of Jellelabad and its environs for some months ; yet the rest of Afghanistan, with the exception of a portion of the neighbourhood around Kandahar, had never thoroughly quieted down. At various points about the different roads towards Kabul, isolated attacks from various large and small tribes had taken place, but always with the sharpest retribution.

In many districts, certainly, the tribes had become settled after the first occupation of their country, directly they saw that this occupation did not mean personal robbery, and that everything which was required by the advancing British was promptly paid for.

With some tribes, however, this latter course was unsatisfactory. Living as they did by predatory habits—plunder, and nothing but plunder, or murder, was what they wanted ; and if they could by any means get this, they made every endeavour to have it. They were ever restless and incursive, until they were taught by severe lessons that it was far better to desist while the British were there, and to conform to a different state of matters.

Some of the natives of the district about Dakka, in common with those of other localities, were amenable to the influence of English gold, and, for a consideration, could be got to secretly supply information as to the doings around the different detached posts, and even to act as guides.

On the 21st of April a paid native spy came into Dakka, and informed the officer in command of the post that the Momunds were gathering from the different villages in considerable numbers, with the object of cutting the line of communication, and of even attacking, if possible, the British force at Dakka itself.

A prompt initiative was necessary. The officer in charge at once directed Captain O'Moore Creagh to proceed, with one hundred and fifty men of the native Indian bat-

talion which he commanded, called Mhairwharras, to the village of Kam Dakka, and there to take possession and hold it as a point of observation, report events, and if possible disperse any hostile gathering in his immediate neighbourhood.

The sun had scarcely set as the gallant Captain paraded his men, and explained to them the nature of the undertaking in which they were about to engage; especially he desired a strict obedience to his orders, and a close watchfulness for sudden attack.

The shades of evening deepened as Captain Creagh gave the word to march. Silently the men faced to their left and stepped off. A rapid progress saw Captain Creagh at the head of his small band of swarthy soldiers close upon the outskirts of the village. It was yet night as he neared its boundaries, and all was apparently quiet. The bark of a native dog or two was all the sound which could be heard as the force reached the place. In a few minutes they had surrounded and quietly taken possession of the whole of its approaches.

Morning broke, and with it the awakening of the inhabitants, who were much astonished and greatly indignant at finding Captain Creagh in possession. Many of the men tried to persuade the Captain that no gathering of armed people was ever intended. The Captain relied upon the information of the spy, resolved to obey his orders, and remained firm. Then the men of the village began to threaten, but finding that they were likely to get the worst of bluster, they ultimately left the place, taking with them most of the women and children.

Captain Creagh had not long to wait to ascertain the truth of the statements made by the villagers; for, upon one of the hills near, as daylight broke, he soon perceived a crowd of armed men, and it was but too evident to him

that they were about to attack the village. It was equally evident that the force which was about to do so, outnumbered his own by at least ten to one.

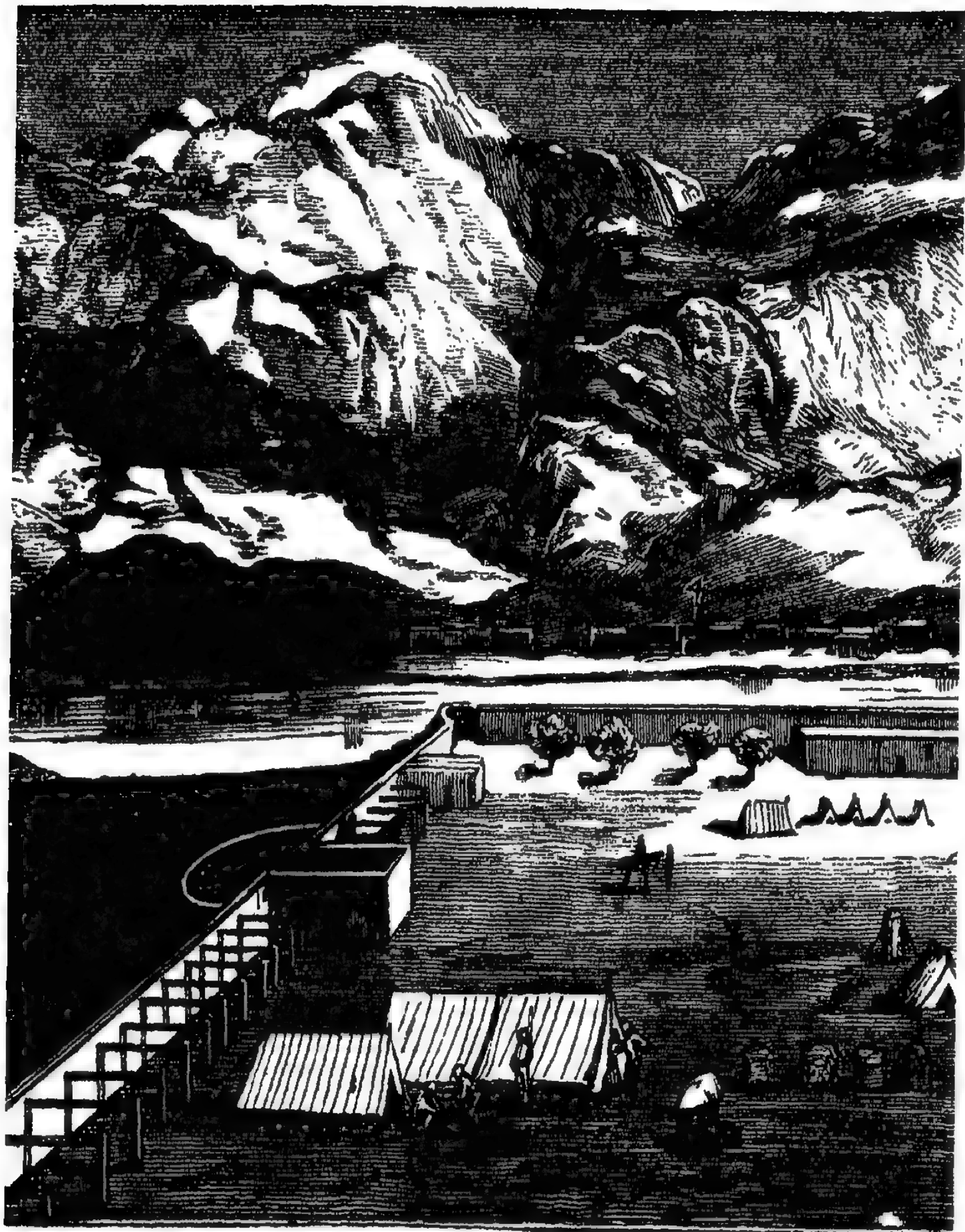
A few moments' consideration told him that any attempt to hold the village against so large a force with the hundred and fifty men at his disposal would be useless, and would only lead to his defeat and destruction. But his first thought was a soldier's first duty under the circumstances; this was to at once send off information to the officer in command of the post at Dakka, and request a reinforcement to enable him to hold the place and inflict chastisement upon the Momunds about to attack him.

This he did by a reliable and trustworthy messenger. Then he looked about him for a better means of defence, and saw, at some little distance from the village, a small cemetery. This he instantly determined to take possession of and hold, as it would enable him to have his men more together under his orders, whilst its surrounding wall would give him some sort of protection, and at the same time he could command from it the village, and render it untenable by the enemy.

He gave some quiet orders. In twos and threes his men quickly stole out of the village, until all were assembled in the cemetery. Then he got as many loose stones as he could, and had them placed on the top of the low wall which surrounded the ground, and judiciously placed his men to repel an assault. He called upon them to be resolute and determined. He informed them that upon this depended their being saved from complete destruction. He was answered by words of firmness, and that his men would stand by him and defend the place to the last. He gave the order to fix bayonets, and calmly awaited the coming onslaught.

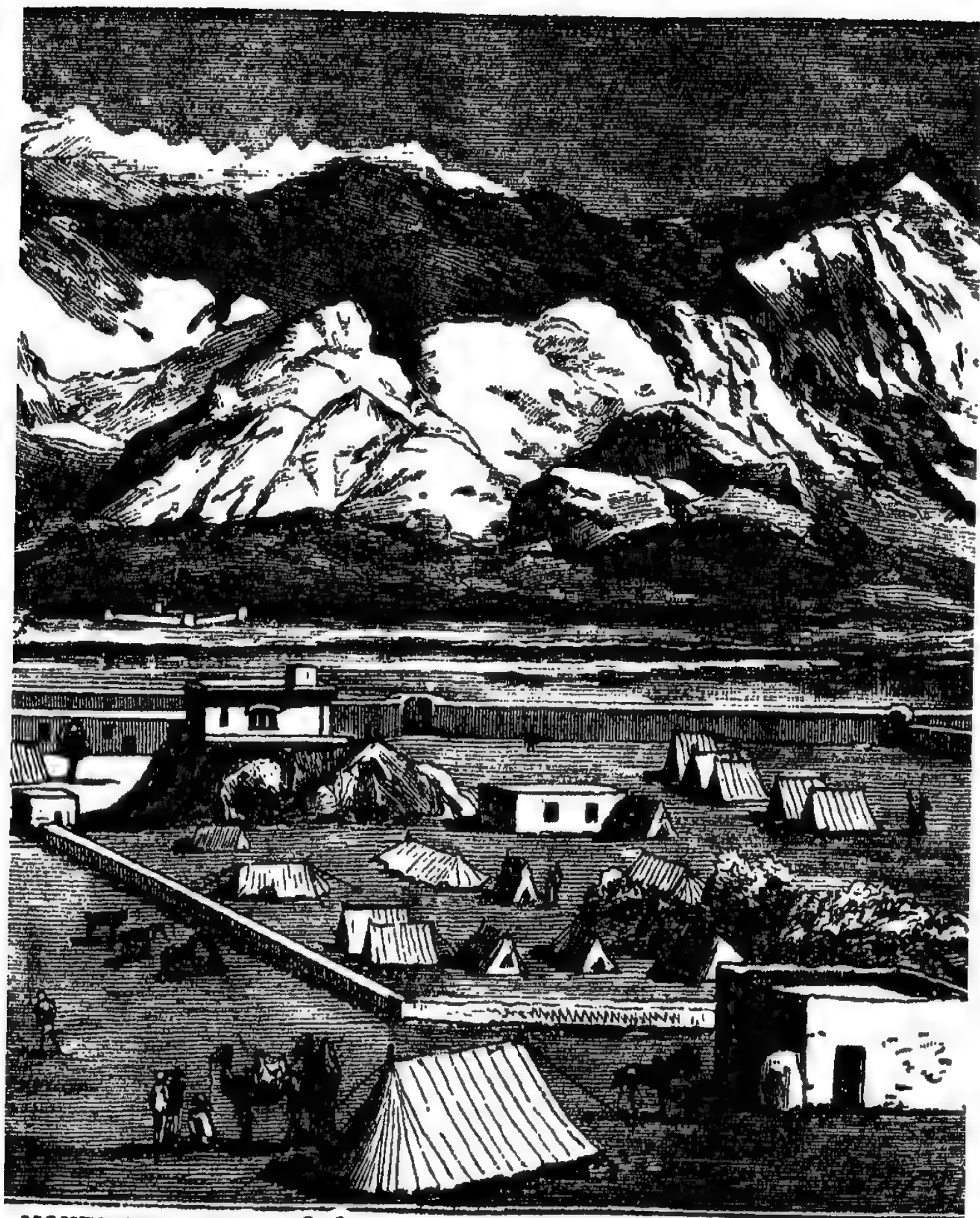
Some of the inhabitants who had remained in the village





DAKKA, OCCUPIED BY GI





NOVEMBER 23RD, 1878.





ran and told the assembled Momunds that Captain Creagh had left it. The armed multitude then advanced, and with loud shouts came down the hill side, and at once occupied the village ; but instead of finding that the Captain had retired altogether, they saw that he held the cemetery, with no intention of giving it up. With wild cries they came forward in compact order and with a rapid run ; but a loud cheer from Captain Creagh was answered by the brave men under him, who at once plied the shot from their rifles thick and fast.

Down fell many of the advancing host, to rise no more ; but on rushed the others, and, dashing up close to the wall, endeavoured to scale it and get amongst its defenders. Two sides of the wall were attacked at the same moment ; some, running round to the rear angles, tried to force their way over. But the resolute defenders stood their ground, and bayonet work took the place of shooting, until the ground at the foot of the stone wall was strewn with killed and wounded Afghans.

Yet they battled fiercely. Retiring some distance, they kept up an incessant fire. This was well returned. Then the Afghans once more rushed to the assault, but Captain Creagh stood at the wall, and with loud command encouraged his men. Again these stood firm, and again were their bayonets freely used. Once more the Afghans retreated to a distance and delivered their fire. A few of the defenders were killed and many were wounded, yet most of these latter kept their posts and managed to fire their rifles. The bullets of the enemy rattled against the stone wall, or whistled past the men who stood undaunted behind it. Narrow escapes there were in every direction within the enclosure. These were unheeded, for every man determined if necessary, to die at his post. From point to point Captain Creagh went with words of encouragement. Cool and confident, he

watched with eager eyes the movements of the fierce men who sought the lives of his force, and he hoped for the early advent of a reinforcement.

For the last time the enemy assembled, and with tom-toms beating and flags flying, furiously assailed the cemetery; but again Captain Creagh's gallant men, with deadly aim and bayonet thrust, sent the Afghans reeling back.

A tremendous cheer! The sound of advancing horsemen was heard. Soon these appeared as they trotted up the road to the village. Clear of this, the horsemen formed line and charged, supported at the run by a body of infantry. In a moment a troop of the 10th Bengal Lancers was amongst the Momunds. These gave a wild volley, then scattered and fled, most of them into the bed of a river running near. They were followed by the supporting infantry, and by Captain Creagh, who now sallied out of the cemetery, sword in hand.

The edge of the river, its bed, and its opposite side were stubbornly held by the retreating Afghans; but the British force would not be denied; quickly, and with steady advance, it drove the Momunds over the river with fearful slaughter. Ultimately the remnants dispersed and ran for the surrounding hills, leaving three-fourths of their number dead and wounded upon the ground.

A terrible lesson had been taught to one of the fiercest tribes of the whole of Afghanistan, the tale of which spread far and near, and helped for many a day to keep the neighbourhood quiet and the country around Dakka unmolested—for a wholesome fear of British prowess shook the Momund power.

After a short rest the little British force returned to Dakka, and Captain Creagh was justly recommended for the Victoria Cross. He obtained it for gallantry of the

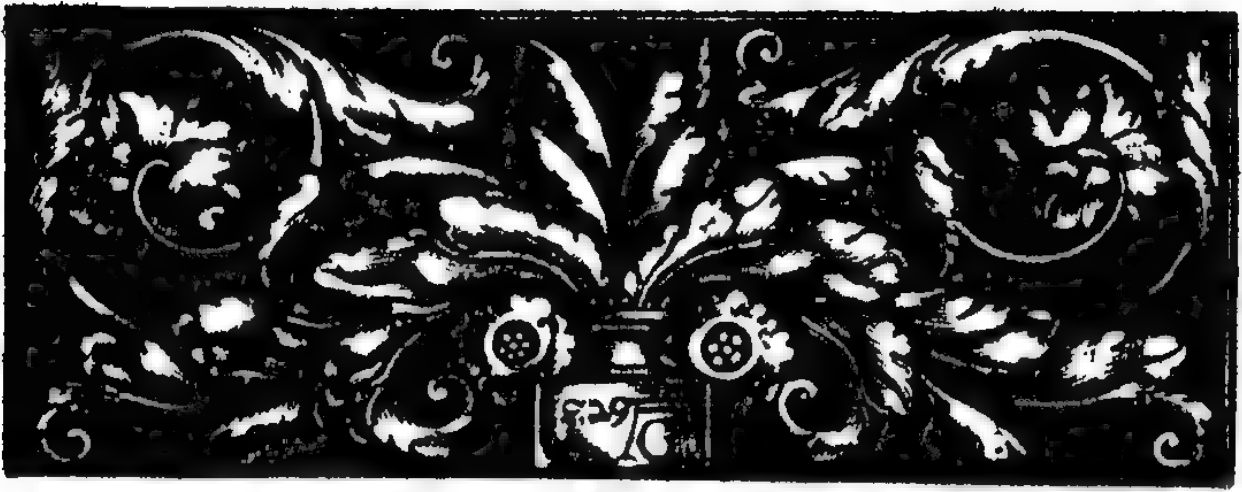
highest order, and for admirable conduct displayed under trying circumstances.

He had saved the detachment under his command from utter destruction, and the post at Dakka from a terrible attack.



MAJOR O'MOORE CREAGH, V.C.,  
*Bombay Staff Corps.*

From his name, I imagine he is an Irishman. I hope he is; for, quick-tempered and impulsive as these men are, they are nevertheless warm-hearted and brave. They have always provided Great Britain with the best of soldiers, and have helped to win many a brilliant victory for the country to which they owe their allegiance.



## CHAPTER V.

### LIEUTENANT HAMILTON AT KUJJA AND KABUL.

THE TOWN OF FUTTEHABAD—GENERAL GOUGH'S POSITION—CONTEMPLATED ATTACK BY AFGHAN TRIBES—THE BRITISH ATTACK UPON THE AFGHAN POSITION—GENERAL GOUGH'S RUSE—THE BATTLE—THE DEATH OF MAJOR BATTYE—THE GUIDES' FINAL CHARGE AND DEFEAT OF THE AFGHANS—LIEUTENANT HAMILTON RECOMMENDED FOR THE VICTORIA CROSS—ITS REFUSAL—LIEUTENANT HAMILTON JUSTIFIES HIS TITLE TO THE VICTORIA CROSS—HIS GALLANT CONDUCT AND HEROIC DEATH—THE VICTORIA CROSS GRANTED AFTER HE DIES.



**N**EARLY twenty miles from Jellelabad, in northern Afghanistan, and on the direct road from that city to Kabul, is situated the town of Futtehabad ; and at a short distance from this town is the fortified village of Kujja. In order to preserve the communications from Jellelabad to Kabul, a considerable force of British troops, under one of the most able and experienced officers of the army, Brigadier-General C. Gough, V.C., had been stationed at Futtehabad, with instructions to form a strong camp, and to keep the

roads and the country for some distance around the town free from the active interference of the various tribes which infested its neighbourhood.

The force under the Brigadier was surrounded on all sides by a highly hostile population, who were only too eager to make a determined attempt to attack and destroy the little army which had taken up its position in the vicinity of Futtehabad.

The Brigadier, an ever active and vigilant commander, had so well posted his advanced picquets, and had sent out his reconnoitring parties with such good judgment, that he was enabled to know at most times whether any considerable gathering of warlike forces was taking place around him, and so to have timely warning to act as circumstances should warrant; namely, either to promptly take the initiative, or to arrange for a determined defence of his position.

The General's experience of Afghan character had already taught him that the best method of fighting the fierce tribes which inhabited the country, was boldness of onslaught coupled with skill in the disposition of troops for attack.

By the possession of peculiarly brilliant courage in combination with an ardent disposition, the initiative method of fighting was more natural to the Brigadier than any other. His nature, to a great extent, infused itself into the force under his command. Nearly every man under him felt that wherever the General was,—dash, combined with consummate skill in disposition, must be the order of the day, and success the undoubted result.

No wonder, then, that the force under this excellent Brigadier's command was considered by the whole army in Afghanistan as "The Invincibles."

On the 2nd of April, 1879, Brigadier-General Gough's



outlying picquets gave him notice that a continuous gathering of hostile inhabitants was undoubtedly going on at a few miles' distance from the camp ; as large bodies of men with arms in their hands, and with drums and flags, had been observed issuing from the town and neighbourhood of Kujja, and proceeding to an extensive plateau which commanded the road to Gundamuk.

The Brigadier was at once on the alert. The position of his camp had been well chosen, and had been made by him well secure against attack. He was aware that any assault against his camp could be resisted by a comparatively small force, and thus leave him free to take a determined initiative against any large body of the fierce people by whom he was surrounded. He detailed off three hundred infantry and two troops of cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel McPherson, of the 17th Regiment, for the defence of his position, and then ordered his whole force under arms. The camp defenders at once took their stations ; the remainder, under himself, paraded to act as warranted by further reports from his scouts.

The General mounted upon his active-looking charger, and slowly passed from right to left of his little army ; his bronzed and well-chiseled features set with firmness of expression. His clear blue eyes with searching glances sought for any matter of detail which would denote an incompleteness of preparation ; but all was ready for battle. Every man stood steady in the ranks and eager for action.

Some minutes spent thus, and he called up Major Battye, in command of the force of Guides.

" Battye," said he, " just trot away up the Gundamuk road and towards Numli Bagh, and look for the reconnoitring party of the 10th Hussars. I do not see them returning. I am getting rather anxious about them—I don't want them to be cut off."

“Draw swords!” was the instant command of this gallant officer to his men. “Threes right”—“Left wheel”—“March”—“Trot” were the orders which followed, and his force was quickly seen in the distance turning into the road and surrounded by a cloud of dust which their rapid progress created.

But soon could be perceived a couple of troopers in full gallop across the intervening ground between the camp and some of the videttes who looked like tiny specks against the sky, as they stood upon the points of the distant hills.

Nearer and nearer, and up to the Brigadier dashed the horsemen. They pulled up their panting horses and delivered a short report.

Immediately from the General was given an order.

“Three troops of the 10th Hussars and four guns of the Horse Artillery will advance at the trot under my personal orders.”—“The infantry will hurry forward after the cavalry and artillery as rapidly as possible.”

The mounted messengers had informed the Brigadier that the enemy had taken possession, in great strength, of high ground which completely overlooked and commanded the road to Gundamuk in the direct line of the main advance, and it was clear that it became necessary to at once dislodge them from the position which they had chosen, so that they should not be able to permanently hold it as one from which they could interfere with the line of roadway, or assume offensive operations. Further, that the work of driving them out of the position should be done without a moment's delay, or they would make good their defensive arrangements, and thereby greatly increase the difficulties of getting them out.

Swiftly forward, therefore, went the guns and the 10th Hussars, the Brigadier at their head, and upon arriving within

sight of a bend of the road a considerable distance in his front and at the foot of the spur of a hill, to his intense satisfaction, he discovered that the reconnoitring party about which he had been so disquieted, had safely returned.

Now, he joined Major Battye's Guides and this force to his own, and swept up the sloping hills to his right. He formed his line as the ground gradually opened out into a broad and slightly-rising plateau.

In the distance below he could perceive his seven hundred infantry in rapid march to his support. He determined to open fire at once. He quickly took in the whole position occupied by the enemy whom he was about to attack.

They were strongly posted upon the crest of the plateau, which at its extreme end rose abruptly and somewhat steeply. The front of the enemy's position extended from right to left about a mile, and each flank rested upon a high bluff which ran directly down into the valleys on each side below. Around the plateau itself were numerous smaller valleys which led through sloping ground to several villages and outlying circular towers or forts.

The Brigadier could perceive that the enemy had already raised breastworks of loose stones, trunks of trees, and such like, behind which they could be seen swarming like bees. There were at least over five thousand armed men in a well-secured and well-chosen position, who confidently awaited an attack by a force of British soldiers numbering at most about twelve hundred men all told.

The slightest fault in the disposition of this force for attack, or a want of resolution and firmness, would cause the troops to be at once surrounded and cut up. But Brigadier Gough knew his men, and, by experience, what they could dare and do.

He galloped up to the officer in command of the artillery, and gave the order.

“Unlimber and open fire ! I think the range is now about twelve hundred yards.”

Round were spun the guns, whose muzzles quickly pointed towards the enemy's position, whilst their limbers with the horses attached stood in their rear. The gunners sprang to their pieces, and out rang the loud boom of the cannon, as shot and shell rushed through the air into the stockades and breastworks.

Then the cavalry were ordered to spread themselves out to skirmish until the infantry came up.

“Gallop back to the infantry,” said the General to an Aide-de-camp, “and tell them to take ground to the left and attack from that flank. For the present I will look after the right with the cavalry and the guns.”

The officer sped away, and soon the head of the infantry column of march took the required direction, and gradually came into action on the left of the plateau.

The enemy, so soon as the Brigadier had opened fire with the cavalry and artillery, sent out a cloud of skirmishers from their right, which tried to get round the flank of the horsemen ; but these threw back their left and met the movement. Then the skirmishers of the enemy grew thicker.

But the lynx eyes of Brigadier Gough had soon seen that the key of the position which had been chosen by the enemy, and the most commanding part, was that occupied by their right ; and it was evident that, at all hazards, they must not be left in possession of this portion of their defence. He resolved to carry this point, and by a ruse. He would pretend to retire, as if the enemy were too strong to assault, so that he might draw the whole of the defenders out from their right position, then turn upon and vigorously assail them in the open ground.

His orders were rapidly given, and all his force was soon perceived in slow retreat across the plateau.

Now the enemy, with exultant shouts and loud war cries, and with drums beating and flags flying, ran out from their breastworks, and in long unbroken lines came down upon the apparently retiring General and his men.

Presently the loud blast of a trumpet sounded high above the din. The British troops suddenly faced about. The infantry formed up shoulder to shoulder. The cavalry collected into troops.

The General raised his sword. The whole force gave a loud "hurrah!" A withering volley, which sent many a swarthy Afghan to the ground, and forward dashed the infantry with a run.

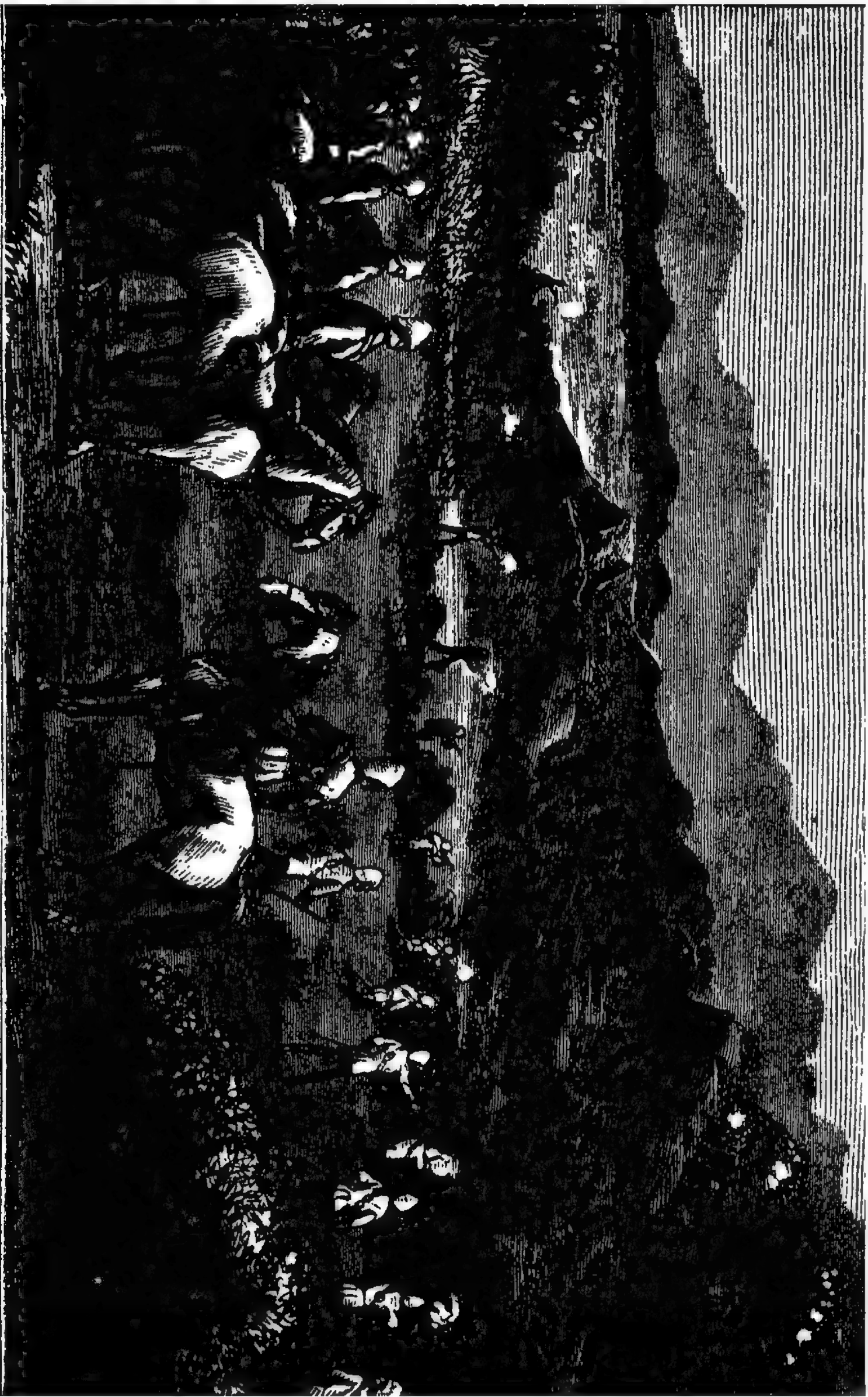
The cavalry on the British right closed up and prepared to charge home. The 17th Regiment and the 25th Regiment of Native Infantry formed the front line on the left. The 45th Native Infantry were in reserve.

The enemy for some minutes remained firmly in line with their standard, and fired rapidly. But a gallant young officer, Lieutenant Wiseman, sword in hand, called upon some men to follow him and rushed upon the flag. A shot fired at close quarters struck him to the heart, and he fell dead; but his gallant followers instantly bayoneted the standard-bearer's escort and captured the trophy. At the sight of this, the enemy wavered.

The Brigadier, who had just previously directed the advance of the infantry, now sent an Aide to the cavalry on his right with directions to charge at once. But the gallant Major Battye, directly to his own front, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Mark Kerr, a little to his right, had already cheered on their men, and every horse was seen extended at racing speed across the plain.

The thundering sound of horses' hoofs shook the air, and





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made the ground tremble beneath their charge, as this splendid cavalry rushed into the ranks of a mass of men who were trying to get upon their flank.

A tremendous tumult for several moments, amidst which could be seen a forest of flashing steel as the sword blades swept above the heads of the cavalry, and then the Afghans were fighting for their lives in every direction.

Three shots struck the gallant leader of the Guides ; two he received in his left thigh. He swerved in his saddle and was faint ; but the lion-hearted man recovered himself and rode on. A few yards further, and yet once again death's messenger reached him in his heart ; and, to the sorrow of his men, he sank lifeless to the ground.

So died the beloved of his friends, the admired of all, the excellent Major Wigram Battye. He was one of England's best of officers, and one of her worthiest of soldiers.

The young Lieutenant of his troop saw him fall ; with a wild cry he shouted to the Guides to avenge their commander. A howl of savage rage and grief combined, and these magnificent and intelligent native soldiers rushed fiercely forward. At every stroke of their swords was a death ! Eagerly they pressed on and spared not ! Their leader's death was amply vindicated.

Close to the gallant young Lieutenant's side rode a sowar of the Guides, one Dowlat Ram. A knot of men in front, as the horsemen charged, turned and stood at bay. They raised their pieces and fired. Down to the ground fell the sowar's charger. It rolled over, and in its agony its rider's leg became entangled in the bridle and the stirrup leather. The knot of Afghans rushed forward to deal the sowar his death-blow. Lieutenant Hamilton at this moment turned in his saddle and saw the Afghans' intent upon his prostrate sowar. He quickly reined his horse and spurred to the

rescue. A deadly stroke from his sabre laid one of the enemy low ; another rushed at the fallen man to kill, but a point from the sword of the Lieutenant, and the Afghan's life was ended ; still another enemy aimed his piece, now at the officer, but the weapon was struck up by another of his Guides who had reined up his horse just in time to save his officer's life, and instantly the Afghan was slain.

Dowlat Ram was disengaged from his dangerous position ; he caught a passing horse, and once more with his Lieutenant, joined in the charge and pursuit.

Now, all the Guides led by Lieutenant Hamilton pressed on. The artillery took up positions on knolls and hill brows, and fired quickly and well. The cavalry, all united together, spread themselves out in pursuit ; they drove, and still yet further drove the scattered fragments of the Afghan force on and on, until, disheartened and exhausted, they took refuge under the fortified walls of the villages or ran into the town of Kujja.

A troop of the 10th Hussars, under Captain Morris Wood, crossed a ravine to its left and pursued a compact number of the enemy who had still held together. The Hussars utterly dispersed them and drove them flying into the forts and villages which interspersed the country.

This, one of the most brilliant actions which occurred during the whole campaign, commenced at two o'clock, and by half-past three the Brigadier and his splendid troops were in possession of the entire position which the enemy had taken up and strengthened for a determined stand. In less than another half-hour the enemy was dispersed and flying over the whole face of the surrounding country, stricken, demoralized, and subdued.

The enemy had received a tremendous lesson of the prowess of British officers and soldiers—a lesson indeed from which all profited, for numerous bodies of Afghans





had been seen by the reconnoitring party of the 10th Hussars amongst the neighbouring hills, and who were evidently on the way to join the mass which fought the gallant Brigadier. These bodies, so soon as they became aware of the disastrous defeat of those whom they were about to join, scattered in every direction. Many of these at once came in and gave their submission to the inevitable, and no further attempt was hereafter made to disturb the force at Futtehabad.

The fine judgment of Brigadier-General Gough was amply exemplified ; as, had he not so promptly attacked the force assembled, the numbers of the enemy would soon have been doubled, and then the position of the General and his force would have become critical, and the loss of life in any later attack in the enemy's position would have been proportionately greater. As it was, this loss was severe both in killed and wounded.

For the manner in which Lieutenant Hamilton assumed the command of the Guides, and for the way in which he led them after the death of Major Battye, also for his heroic defence of the fallen sowar, he was recommended for the Victoria Cross. It was refused !

This splendid young officer justified his title to what had been denied to him, by heroically proving it to his countrymen ; but only by dyingsword in hand, surrounded by hundreds of ferocious men—only by showing to those who had refused the recommendation for the Victoria Cross, that he could twice win it by the self-sacrificing courage of a British soldier.

Lieutenant Hamilton was in command of the escort of Sir Louis Cavagnari who was sent to Kabul as the new Resident on the advent of Yakoob Khan to power, and of the settlement of the treaty of Gundamuk.

On the 3rd of September, 1879, at about eight a.m., some



Heratee regiments which had been sent by Ayoub Khan to Kabul broke into mutiny, and a soldier having cried out, "Let us go to the Residency and kill the British envoy," the whole body of mutineers rushed to where Sir Louis Cavagnari and his staff were residing. Having surrounded the building, they were fired upon by some of the escort. The mutineers then retired and obtained additional arms and ammunition, and commenced a regular attack upon the place. The whole of the occupants went to the top of the building, and on the roof constructed a sort of shelter trench against the effects of the murderous fire which was poured upon them from the tops and windows of contiguous houses, and about one o'clock Sir Louis Cavagnari was wounded by a bullet which ricocheted on to his forehead.

During the interval two or three messengers had been dispatched to the Emeer for assistance. Whether all these reached him or not, has never been known; but eventually a letter was sent by an old Guide sowar, and from after-evidence it would appear that Yakoob Khan wrote on the back of this letter, "If God wills, I am just making arrangements;" but this answer never reached the besieged in the Residency.

About three o'clock Lieutenant Hamilton managed to send off another messenger to the Emeer, promising to make good all arrears of pay to those troops who had mutinied ostensibly on account of pay matters; but by this time the mutineers had got to the top of the Residency and were setting fire to it.

The evidence of some of those who witnessed what followed states that, animated by the example of Lieutenant Hamilton, Sir Louis Cavagnari being already wounded and in a room below, the whole of those who accompanied the mission made a most determined stand to keep out the

Afghans who now closed around the building in large numbers.

It would seem that so soon as the place was set on fire from above, those who were defending it were driven from room to room. Lieutenant Hamilton and those who remained alive, at last got pressed into the courtyard, and there prepared for a final stand. The gates were quickly burst open, when the Lieutenant, with a shout, and heading all who remained, rushed out into the mass of Afghans and tried to cut a passage through them ; but a phalanx of bloodthirsty beings were around them all. A stroke from Lieutenant Hamilton's sword cut down one Afghan ; he then parried a thrust at his throat from a man close to him, and with his left hand fired his pistol and killed his assailant. A third rushed at him ; he, too, was hit by a pistol-shot from the Lieutenant, and dropped to the ground. Another came at him and delivered a tremendous cut at his head ; he parried it, and returned it with a sword point which laid the man dead at his feet. A knot of men now formed in front of him, and others closed upon the party for a final rush together. For a moment the Lieutenant's pistol kept those opposite to him at bay ; in the next they dashed upon him ; his pistol brought the foremost down, but the remainder were instantly around him with swords upraised. Cuts and thrusts, delivered almost simultaneously at the gallant young man's body, sent him staggering to the ground, dead !

A more splendid defence of life was never witnessed. Even his fierce enemies expressed their admiration of his heroism, and of the manner in which all with him defended themselves to the last.

Sir Louis Cavagnari was crushed by the falling in of the roof of the Residency, and his body was burnt to a cinder.

Lieutenant Hamilton's body, with that of Mr. Jenkyns,

political agent, was stripped and thrown across a gun. It was afterwards buried by some natives of the city.

This country was soon ringing with the sound of praise for the way Lieutenant Hamilton met his fate, and with the



LIEUTENANT HAMILTON, V.C.,

*Corps of Guides.*

example of conspicuous bravery which he had once more shown before the eyes of his countrymen.

What was it which now stimulated the powers that be, to grant Lieutenant Hamilton the Victoria Cross as the reward

for bravery which he could never enjoy, and which could only be handed to his relatives to keep as an heirloom, and as something connected with the family history?

It may perhaps be said that if he had been granted the order when he was recommended it in the first instance, he would not have held it long; but this excellent young officer would have had the satisfaction of wearing upon his breast his well-won distinction; he would have known that the brave Guides whom he commanded would have looked upon him as an officer who had well supported the credit of that valuable corps. For a few months at least, he would have known what it was to find that his gracious Queen had appreciated a gallant deed of bravery done in her service, and that one of her young soldiers had been encouraged to still brighter efforts.

With the self-abnegation of a noble spirit, he showed those who had previously refused him the Victoria Cross, that he was above all considerations respecting either them or the distinction which they had withheld; that he was actuated by a sense of duty which was far beyond distinctions, titles, or rewards. In that spirit he defended the Residency until forced from it by burning flames. In that spirit he died, for he would not surrender his trust.

Was it that those who had declined to give Lieutenant Hamilton the Victoria Cross upon the strong recommendation of his commanding officer after the action at Kujja, thought that in all likelihood the refusal would leak out before the public, now that his name had become so prominent, and that the way in which he died was upon every tongue; that they would meet with well-merited reproach for an act of injustice to a brave young man; and that the best way to meet coming obloquy was to say nothing at all about any former denial, and thus forestall unpleasant action? It is hard to say. The secrets of the official

chamber are difficult to penetrate. Injustice often takes the place of reward, and unfairness is only unmasked by those having powerful friends in high quarters, or by some train of circumstances which expose and show up to public scandal those who perpetrate it.

The Victoria Cross was granted to Lieutenant Hamilton too late, and it was but a poor salve to the already wounded feelings of his relations and friends who knew the truth.





## CHAPTER VI.

### CAPTAIN SARTORIUS ASSAULTS THE HILL-TOP AT SHAH-JUI.

THE TRIBE OF WARLIKE GHILZAIS—INTERVIEW WITH THE GHILZAI CHIEF—NIGHT MARCH TO SHAH-JUI—SURPRISE OF THE AFGHAN PICQUEE—THE GHILZAIS DISCOVERED—THE CAVALRY COMBAT—ATTACK UPON THE FORT IN THE PLAIN AND ASSAULT OF THE CASTELLATED BUILDING—THE TERRIBLE ASCENT—RUSH OF THE GHILZAIS—THE FEARFUL STRUGGLE—DEATH OF ALL THE GHILZAIS—CAPTAIN SARTORIUS SEVERELY WOUNDED—THE RETURN TO TAZI.



FROM the Kabul river in northern Afghanistan, to a point close to the city of Kandahar in the southern portion of the province, and running through a territory extending in a direct line to a distance of over two hundred and forty miles, there dwells one of the most dangerous tribes throughout the

whole of India.

The men of this tribe are tall in stature, with powerful frames. Their aspect is rough and forbidding; their manners are fierce and uncouth. Other characteristics, in con-



junction with the great numerical strength they possess when united for any definite object, cause them to be, of all the tribes which go to form the mass of people that make up the whole population of Afghanistan, one of the most truculent and difficult to control, of all who come under the authority of any ruler of that country.

Fierce in disposition as the numerous branches of this warlike tribe are, they are equally as covetous and double-dealing. Many of the inhabitants of this long strip of hilly country would sell their own mothers for gain. Jealous dissensions amongst the leaders of the branches of this tribe are constantly rife. The dwellers in each distinct district frequently act as seems most advantageous to themselves, and at all times endeavour to over-reach their neighbours.

By judicious management this powerful tribe can be generally kept split up into sections, and by such means their strength for offensive purposes can be weakened.

From point to point along the whole line of route from Kabul to Kandahar, spies can always be obtained, who will for a consideration, give a pretty fair account of the doings of any particular branch of the great Ghilzai tribe (for such is its name), and so afford timely warning of evil intentions.

Without doubt, in the late campaign, the effect of British gold, on many occasions, caused the commanders of the English military force which held possession of the northern and even part of the southern portion of Afghanistan, to receive information of contemplated attacks by hostile branches of the different tribes inhabiting the country; and it is equally certain that the money which was spent in payment for this information was well laid out, as it enabled the British officers to make prompt arrangements in sufficient time to prevent what would otherwise have led to

a great loss of life, and in all probability on more than one occasion, to a severe disaster.

Indeed, to the absence of good judgment in the selection of spies, and adequate inducements to come in and give secret information in proper time, was to be attributed the only real and undoubted disaster which the British arms met with during the whole time of occupation. With almost this single exception, by well-judged recognition of the service of spies or informants, and by a swift action upon the statements made by these, the campaign was a series of acknowledged and brilliant successes under most difficult circumstances, and often over overwhelming numbers of well-armed men.

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On the evening of the 23rd of October, 1879, in the southern part of Afghanistan, three men could be seen sitting opposite to each other in an oblong tent, at the entrance to which stood an armed soldier in the uniform of Her Majesty's 59th Regiment of the Line. This tent was surrounded by many others similar in shape, yet smaller.

Two of the three men were by their dress British officers. The taller of the two was evidently by his manner and bearing the senior in rank, by the fact that the other, as if under instructions, took down in writing the questions which his superior asked of the third man present, as well as the answers which this man gave to his interrogator.

The third person in the tent was a tall, gaunt, and swarthy-looking personage of rough aspect, yet with a look of bold cunning in his heavily-browed dark eyes. This man wore a high turban and garments of Indian texture, style, and make. He seemed ill at ease, yet he answered the questions put to him with readiness, and even at times extended his remarks beyond the mere reply which was needed.

It was apparent that this rough-looking swarthy man did not wish to be overheard, for, whenever a footstep sounded as if approaching the tent in which he was seated, he hesitated and stopped in his answer, and only resumed it again when the noise of the step receded in the distance. His eyes meanwhile looked suspiciously around, and at the faces of his two companions, who, on the contrary, sat with cool and impassable demeanour, and seemed bent only upon extracting all the information this dark-looking personage had to give, and upon reducing this to writing as expeditiously as possible.

A gentleman, that is to say socially, in his particular clan, was this individual. He was an influential leader of one of the tribes which inhabited the neighbourhood of Tazi, some thirty miles beyond the fort and town of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, one of the principal places owned by the great tribe of Ghilzais; but the only difference which could be seen in his personal appearance compared to that of others of his tribe, consisted in his dress, which was of a somewhat more elaborate and better quality than that of the general body of his fellows.

Here, at Tazi, about 118 miles from Kandahar, was fixed the camp of Brigadier-General Hughes, as an outlying post from which he could watch the movements of any threatening mass of the powerful Ghilzai tribe which might find it advantageous to its interests or in its desire for plunder, to stir up different branches of their own and other tribes against the main body of the British in and about Kandahar, with the ultimate object of a combined attack.

Let us now ascertain what was the nature of the conversation which was taking place between the military-looking man and the swarthy Afghan who sat directly opposite; the senior officer questioning in Hindostani, the Afghan answering in his own vernacular, and the junior British officer inter-

preting both questions and answers when not readily understood, and taking them down on paper.

The questions and answers shall be given consecutively.

From the senior British officer, who in short was Brigadier-General Hughes himself:—

“ You have come into camp, and wish to see me. Have you any communication to make ? ”

“ Yes, I have something to tell you.”

“ What is the nature of your information ? ”

“ An attack is about to be made upon your camp.”

“ Indeed ! and by whom ? ”

“ By the tribe of Tarakhi Ghilzais.”

“ How do you know this ? ”

“ Because I have received information that a gathering of the tribe is taking place for this purpose, and I have been asked to join in the enterprise.”

“ Did you refuse ? ”

“ Yes, I did.”

“ On what grounds ? ”

Here the swarthy man's eyes looked furtively at those of the questioner, but only to find in them steadiness and frankness ; he answered therefore—

“ I do not want to be at enmity with the British. I wish to be friends with them.”

“ I am pleased to hear you say so, and you shall not regret it, or the step you have now taken in coming to me.”

A gleam of satisfaction shot across the Afghan's features at this remark, as the questioner continued—

“ Have you heard at what time the attack is to take place, and what the force numbers, which is to make it ? ”

“ The attack is to be made upon you to-morrow night—I do not know the exact time ; but the force to attack you will number about two thousand men, horse and foot.”

“Very good ; then do you know from what direction the attack is to take place ?”

“I feel sure that the attack will take place from the direction of the village of Shah-jui, as the gathering point is to be at a few miles beyond, and the Tarakhis will pass through that village and along the road from thence towards your camp.”

“You have done well in giving me the information ; you shall not go away empty-handed—of that I will take good care ; but do you think you could further assist me as the guide to any party which I may send towards Shah-jui to protect my camp ?”

For a moment or two the dark gentleman looked somewhat alarmed, but, recovering himself quickly, returned a reply—

“If I do so, I must have secrecy and protection from you.”

“That you shall have ; you shall not be brought under fire of the Tarakhis, nor shall your part in this affair become known, and the reward for your faithfulness to the British shall be greatly enhanced.”

“Upon the word of a British commander to act as you say you will towards me, I will undertake the duty of guide, and I trust you to keep my part of what occurs, a secret from all.”

“You shall be under the personal protection of my next in command here, who will be in charge of the expedition towards Shah-jui, and no harm shall come to you in any way.”

“Then I will undertake the task.”

“That is well. I would now ask you to leave me for the present. Kindly remain in camp, and every honour shall be paid to you, and to the exalted position which you occupy amongst your own people.”







"I am satisfied. I will do as you wish and remain in camp, and will accompany your troops. I will act faithfully by them."

The British commander then rose from his seat. The Afghan did the same, and "salaamed." He was conducted from the tent by the junior officer; he was then given over to the charge of one of the other officers in camp, with instructions that he was to pay the Afghan gentleman every attention; and *privately*, that he was not to be allowed to be out of sight of the officer, even for one moment.

The officer who had taken the Afghan from the tent returned to it, and presented himself again to his chief.

"Just go and tell Colonel Kennedy that I should like to see him at once," said the Brigadier.

The officer turned and left the tent, and a few minutes afterwards Colonel Kennedy entered it.

"Kennedy," said Brigadier-General Hughes, "I have just had a visit from one of our neighbouring gentlemen, who has told me that the Tarakhi Ghilzais are gathering to give us a warming-up to-morrow night. I don't intend to wait for them, but will send a force out of camp to anticipate their movements, and if possible to disperse them. I want you to take charge of the party, and I will support you by bringing out every man I can spare, so that if you are hard pressed I shall be ready to help you."

"At what time, sir, am I to start?" said Colonel Kennedy.

• "I think at about half-past one," returned the Brigadier.

"What force will you require me to take?" said the Colonel.

"Well, take two guns of the Royal Artillery, one hundred and fifty sabres of the 2nd Punjaub cavalry, say eighty or ninety men of the 59th, and a hundred of the Beloochees."

"Very well, sir," said Colonel Kennedy; "I suppose I shall have your written orders?"

"Yes," returned the General; "I will write out your instructions in the course of an hour or so; in the meantime get your men detailed off and have them ready to make a start at, say, one o'clock."

"They shall be ready, sir," said the Colonel, who then left the tent to make the necessary preparations.

At one o'clock precisely Colonel Kennedy mounted his horse, and rode towards the spot where his small force was assembled.

The night was dark, yet fine. Scarcely a sound could be heard other than that of the horses champing their bits as the animals stood impatiently waiting the signal to march.

Presently the swarthy Ghilzai gentlemen, in company with an officer well armed, approached Colonel Kennedy and saluted him in the Afghan method. A horse was brought up, upon which the Afghan mounted. The Colonel at once gave the order to march.

In perfect silence the troops moved off. The advanced guard of the cavalry trotted quickly out until it attained its proper distance; the men composing it drew out their carbines from the leather buckets which held them at their sides, and then sent forward two of their number as scouts. The Beloochees led the main body, then came the two guns, following which and in support of these, moved the party of the 59th, the rear being brought up by a small party of the Punjaub cavalry.

A cautious march of nearly ten miles under the guidance of the Ghilzai gentleman had been made in this order, when suddenly, at a turn of the road, and on the rise of a low hill, could be seen in the distance what appeared to be a small ball of fire.

A halt was at once called. At that moment it wanted but a short time to daybreak, and if the force was to advance much farther without being openly observed, it must do so with rapidity, and before the Ghilzai scouts could be well pushed forward.

"That is a picquet fire," said the Ghilzai gentleman to Colonel Kennedy; "it is directly in your path to Shah-jui, where a large body of Tarakhis are assembled ready to advance towards you."

"Then I will surprise the picquet at once, if I can do so," replied the Colonel.

"I would ask you to be relieved now of my guidance of the expedition; my work is accomplished. I wish to return to the camp," said the Ghilzai.

"You shall do so certainly," returned Colonel Kennedy, "and under the escort of one of my officers and two of my troopers, who will accompany you and be responsible for your personal safety."

Colonel Kennedy then called up one of the English officers present, and directed him to conduct the Afghan back to camp with all dispatch, and *with emphasis* said, "I hold you responsible that this gentleman is safely taken back to the chief."

The young officer calmly drew up to the side of the Afghan, directed the two troopers to take their proper distance in his rear, and in another moment, with his charge, had disappeared into the darkness.

Colonel Kennedy then ordered up a party of the 59th and another of the Beloochees in support. He pointed out the fire, and directed that without the slightest noise, they should steal forward, surprise, and take or destroy the picquet.

Captain Sartorius was in charge of the surprise party. He silently led the way down the hill and reached the

bottom, and with ever-increasing caution gradually drew near the fire, always directing his party to take advantage of the cover of tree-trunk and brushwood to hide their advance. Thirty yards or so from the blazing sticks which formed the fire was reached ; Captain Sartorius looked around for a moment, and saw by the dim light of the fire that his men, having crept from bush to bush were now well about him. Another step and the blaze would expose them all. A solitary Ghilzai was pacing slowly to and fro in front of the fire ; his companions lay about, their arms by their side. With a loud cry the captain sprang forward. He was swiftly followed by his men.

In a moment Captain Sartorius was seen. A bullet from the Afghan sentry's rifle whizzed by the Captain's ear. The report aroused the sleeping men, who sprang to their feet ; but the British were amongst them.

A hand-to-hand fight with bayonets took place for a few moments, and five of the picquet lay on the ground dead, and the remainder were bounding away into the brushwood around. In the darkness these got off, and made the best of their way to the village of Shah-jui, close to which the British now were.

These escaped Ghilzais of course gave the alarm. But Colonel Kennedy now quickly advanced along the road, and soon after daybreak came in sight of the village, and at once perceived a force of over two hundred well-mounted horsemen and seven hundred footmen streaming out of it to attack him.

Immediately he formed up his small force, placed the 59th in support of his two guns, advanced his cavalry to cover his flanks, and resolutely moved forward over ground much intersected by irrigating channels and occasional brushwood.

The oncoming Afghans evidently did not like the bearing

of the British, for the Ghilzai footmen seemed irresolute. Colonel Kennedy therefore directed his small force of cavalry to manœuvre so as to threaten the straggling line of men who were advancing across the plain in his front, and, if possible, to cause them to assemble in groups for mutual protection. This order succeeded. Then he placed his two guns in position, and opened fire upon the groups.

The shots were well aimed, and by twos and threes the enemy could be perceived falling to the ground ; but the artillery fire caused them to again spread themselves out. Once more the cavalry threatened, but the Ghilzai horsemen came forward and made a counter movement which checked the British manœuvre. But the English cavalry commander was not to be beaten. He dismounted a number of his men, and ordered them to skirmish as infantry. Snider bullets were soon humming about the heads and into the ranks of the Afghan horse, several of whom fell from the British fire. This they would not stand, for they faced about and retired.

Now all the British force in proper formation again advanced, and the whole of the Ghilzais went back before them. In this way six miles were traversed. The ground was difficult for a cavalry charge, and the Ghilzais gave no opening ; but now in the midst of the plain rose suddenly a steep and rugged mound, towards which many of the Ghilzais ran and took post in a low earthwork near its base, and in a castellated building at its top.

The British went forward with a run, and thus prevented the Afghans from occupying this strong position in great force, many of them retiring beyond it from the rush of infantry.

Then Colonel Kennedy directed his force of cavalry to go round the base of the hill and threaten both flanks of the horsemen who were on the other side of it ; but at



this moment two shells, which the officer in charge of the artillery intended for the top of the mound, passed over and fell amongst the Afghan cavalry; who at once retired. But still the gallant Punjaubees pressed on. One portion of them to the front, another as if to threaten the Ghilzai horsemen's flank. Dismounting again some of his men, the troop Captain in front gave the Ghilzais a volley, and ordered his troopers to remount and fall back.

This latter movement had the desired effect, for the Ghilzais, thinking that the British horsemen were retreating, turned about and came swiftly trotting on in pursuit. The other officer of the Punjaubees, who had been threatening the Ghilzai flank, had been carefully watching the movements of his brother officer in front of the Ghilzais. He saw the feigned retreat and knew its object. He wheeled his men up and prepared for a charge. The Punjaabee horse who were in pretence of retiring, suddenly faced about. Now both parties of British horsemen with a wild cheer rushed forward towards the Ghilzais. These, perceiving themselves outmanœuvred, instantly spurred their horses for a charge. In another instant was observed the terrible shock of cavalry in full career towards each other for mortal combat. In the early morning's light could be seen the bright blades of flashing swords, as they were wielded by the strong arms of their owners high above their heads to strike. The striving combatants appeared for several minutes as one indiscriminate mass of struggling men and horses.

Then away, and yet away, broke the yielding Afghans in headlong flight across the plain, followed by the exultant Punjaubees in close pursuit! In these few minutes five-and-twenty Ghilzais were laid dead upon the sward. Yet did the gallant Punjaubees not escape unscathed, for many were wounded by sword-cuts.

At this, Colonel Kennedy directed Captain Sartorius, with

his company of the 59th British regiment, to assault and take the earthwork at the foot of the steep mound. A loud English "hurrah!" and direct at the place this officer led his men. Within a few moments they were over the work, and the Ghilzais were streaming out of it around the back of the hill and over the country side towards the nearest villages.

But there still remained the men who had taken possession of the castellated work at the extreme top of the mound. These were, by the slow nature of their rifle fire, not many—at most seven or eight. They could not however, be left there to shoot upon and kill as they chose, the soldiers who had taken the earthwork below.

Again therefore, Captain Sartorius was requested by Colonel Kennedy to capture an enemy's post, and this time the tower above him. The gallant officer cheerfully undertook the task; yet, as he did so, he knew that he had taken upon himself a desperate duty, for the party in the building were now surrounded and would die fighting to the death. He was almost certain that his own life, and perhaps nearly the whole of those who could accompany him, would be sacrificed in the attempt; still he never shrank from his order, neither did the men selected to help him. He took with him fifteen men, and then coolly commenced his serious service.

The rock up which he began to toil was almost perpendicular on all its sides. So difficult of access was the building at the top, that three rough zigzag narrow paths had been cut out of the surface of the mound towards it. Up therefore, the path nearest to the earthwork, Captain Sartorius, with the skill and sure-footedness of a practised mountaineer, climbed his perilous way.

His men in the earthwork below tried to keep down the fire of the desperate Ghilzais at the top, by a rapid discharge from their Martini rifles.

The slow progress of the Captain and his men was watched by the whole force beneath, who now looked on in admiration at the example of cool courage, never to be outdone, which was displayed before their eyes.

Captain Sartorius, under a rapid fire from above, and a yard or two in front of the nearest man of the 59th, at last gained the final turn of the zig-zag path. His men were toiling up in his footsteps. He had scarcely rounded the corner of the path close to the building when seven Ghilzais, with cries like wild beasts, rushed furiously down upon him and those who followed.

Swords, sharp as razors, were instantly slashing right and left amongst the English soldiers. For a few minutes, what appeared to be an indiscriminate *melée* took place upon the narrow path; then, to the astonishment of all the on-lookers, there came rolling over and over, like huge stones shot down the sides of the precipitous rock, the bodies of the whole of its defenders, dead! but unfortunately accompanied by another, having on a red uniform. This was the body of a fine young English soldier, a private of the 59th, whose skull had been cleft through by the sword of his adversary, almost at the same moment as the Afghan himself had received his death-wound by the soldier's bayonet thrust.

Captain Sartorius was severely wounded by having both his hands slashed across, and two of his brave followers of the 59th were also seriously injured by cuts from swords wielded by the desperate Ghilzais.

But the silent bayonet had done its deadly work; not a shot had been aimed by Captain Sartorius or his gallant party, for they had not time to fire.

With this episode ended the dispersion of the Ghilzais, and once more was the judgment of a sagacious British officer justified, for Brigadier-General Hughes found that

the word of the influential Ghilzai gentleman was correct, as Colonel Kennedy's scouts informed him that over 1,000 additional Ghilzais were at a short distance watching the result of the fight, and evidently waiting to rush out, pursue the British if defeated, and follow them up by a determined attack upon the camp itself; but on learning the repulse of the force from Shah-jui, these thousand men rapidly dispersed to their homes, and were no more seen by the British.

This branch of the powerful Ghilzai tribe had received a lesson which was not lost upon them, and the news of the way the British fought, travelled from end to end of the long district which was inhabited by the warlike tribe to which the country belonged.

Captain Sartorius recovered from his wounds, and regained the use of his hands. He was recommended—and justly so—for the Victoria Cross. He received it, and he deserved it, for an act of valour which was a fine example to the men who witnessed it.

After the dispersion of the Ghilzais, the wounded were looked after and the force returned towards the camp at Tazi; and on its march met Brigadier-General Hughes with all his available force, who had marched out in support of Colonel Kennedy in case he met with a reverse.

Fifty-six men of the Ghilzai force were killed, and a large number were wounded, who were carried out of action. The numbers of the British force killed and wounded in this affair were—two men killed, two officers wounded, both severely, and twenty-four men wounded.

The leader of the organization to attack the camp was killed in a charge of the Punjaub cavalry. His standard and splendid mare were captured, the mare having two Snider bullets in her neck. The leader's name was Sahib Jan.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REVEREND J. W. ADAMS AT KILLA KAZI.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE OCCUPATION OF KABUL—THREAT-  
ENED CONCENTRATION OF THE TRIBES—ARRANGE-  
MENTS TO MEET IT—FIGHT AT KILLA KAZI—THE REV.  
J. W. ADAMS RESCUES TWO LANCERS—RETIREMENT OF  
BRITISH TO COVER KABUL.



NOTHING excites the admiration of man—nothing wins the approval of civilized worlds, so much as the endeavour to save, at the moment of its peril, that life which, having once been given, is, in all its attributes, so dear to all.

Life—that wondrous possession of unfathomable authorship—that always incomprehensible condition imposed upon every atom that grows upon nature's surface—that state, which in mankind holds power mental and physical, and creates thereby communities, kingdoms, and empires, in which its wanton destruction is rendered a crime, its salvation a heroism.

Various, amongst peoples, are the encouragements to save human life. Institutions are formed for its preservation, Honours and distinctions are granted, for risk in the duty of trying to rescue life in danger.



In the field of battle, where occurs more than ordinary bravery in the endeavour to save a comrade from a sudden and violent end, the Victoria Cross is frequently granted; but the reward has, so far, been given to only one clergyman—this owing, no doubt, to the peculiarity of his position amongst armies on a campaign, or in the midst of fighting, at which indeed he is not expected to be present.

Yet self-sacrificing chaplains have in many instances gone forth, not to fight, but to do a Christian work—to comfort the dying, to attend upon the wounded.

In this work, one, a brave man, was killed while in the performance of his self-imposed duties during the sortie from Kandahar, on the 15th of August 1879; at the moment indeed, in which he was performing an act of noble devotion. This man's name was the Reverend G. M. Gordon, of the Church Missionary Society, who was mortally wounded whilst attending to the men under a heavy fire. Here is what was said of this excellent man by General Primrose in the dry details of military despatches:—"I take this opportunity of paying my small tribute of admiration to a man who, by his kindness and gentleness, had endeared himself to the whole force, and who, in the end, died administering to their wants."

In this record it becomes my pleasing task to state how the honourable distinction of the Victoria Cross was gained by another of the same excellent profession.

In writing of this event, it becomes necessary to allude to the circumstances which led up to the action in which it was earned.

• Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British resident in Kabul, with his escort, had been cruelly murdered by the Afghan troops in the city during the previous September, and Sir Frederick Roberts had found it necessary to advance from his position overlooking Kabul and occupy that city, the Bala Hissar or



Arsenal, and its contiguous cantonments of Sherpur. The British General, with admirable foresight into probable events, had, while holding the city in the endeavour to restore order, prepared the Sherpur lines as a place of arms and a position to which he could retire if pressed, and hold it against all combination to oust him, until reinforcements should arrive.

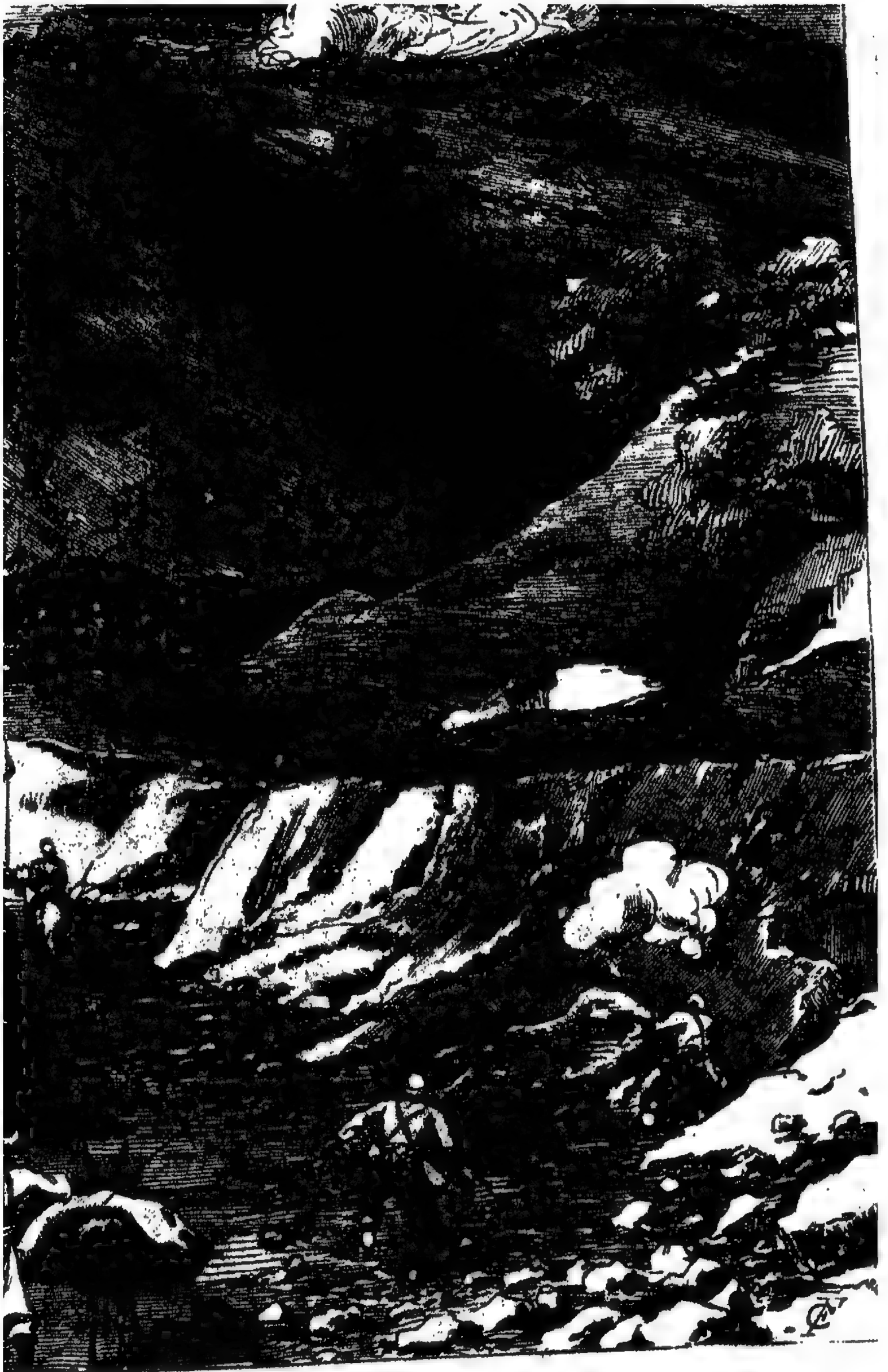
General Roberts had for some time been keenly watching the aspect of affairs, politically and militarily, since his arrival in Kabul. His rapid advance upon the city from his position above the Shaturgarten Pass had been too rapid for the enemy to combine in any great strength to oppose his march towards and occupation of Kabul; yet he had not long been there, before he perceived indications of a threatening attitude amongst the various chiefs and tribes in and around the districts about the city, and of a combination having for its object the destruction of the British forces and the plunder of their camps.

There can be no doubt, very many of the inhabitants expected, as the consequence of the massacre of the British Envoy and the blowing up of the Bala Hissar, that a heavy fine would be levied upon the city, and that the British would then withdraw from Afghanistan.

Forty years previously, Generals Pollock and Nott had temporarily occupied Kabul, sacked the principal bazaars, and retired; and there can be equally no doubt that now, the remembrance of this, led the occupants of the city and environs to believe that a repetition of that course would take place, and Afghanistan be, at similar cost, free from its invaders. Nothing of the kind was permitted to be done by General Roberts and his troops; therefore, while he held occupation, a period of uncertainty amongst the Afghans prevailed as to the course which should be followed by them under the circumstances.









It is certain that the prolonged occupation of parts of Kabul, the Bala Hissar, and the fortified cantonments at Sherpur—that spot which the late Emeer had intended for his own army; the capture and retention of his enormous park of artillery and the vast munitions of war which had been collected at Kabul—the possession of which had so raised the Afghans to a position of great military power and *prestige* amongst surrounding nations; the measures which had been taken to dismantle the Arsenal, and the conveyance of the ex-Emeer Yakoob Khan to India, had all greatly inflamed the Afghans for many miles around Kabul to a serious degree, against the British possessors of positions which commanded the city. The Afghans gradually came to the resolution of driving the British from those positions, and, if possible, out of Afghanistan altogether, as they had done with such slaughter many years before, under somewhat identical circumstances.

The jealousy and mistrust amongst themselves, which had existed amidst the Afghan chiefs and tribes, now began to give way before two particular desires—namely, that of driving out the British, and of plunder to be obtained partly from the Kabulese and partly from the British camps.

It was soon clear that the various tribes and peoples of the surrounding country once determined upon this, there would want but an impulse to arouse them to action. This was not long in coming, through incitation to a fanatical or religious war by first, an aged chief Moolla, known as the Mushk-i-Alam, who no sooner began his preaching against the English, than denunciations of them and their occupation of the country began to be made in every mosque of every city and town throughout Northern Afghanistan. Thus, by rapid degrees, the religious element dominated in all directions, and a movement for united action against the British began to be only too self-evident, by a resistance to the



procuring of supplies, and by open acts of violence which it became necessary to punish on the spot as they occurred.

As truculent—as treacherous and unreliable a race as ever existed, the Afghans would sacrifice their own brothers for money. Jealous of each other's power or influence, they eagerly watch each other's actions, so that they may betray their neighbour to the best bidder for their services. General Roberts well gauged their character, and made full use of his knowledge. As usual, spies were to be procured in plenty. These made him acquainted with the general movement, and he was not long in perceiving the consequences likely to accrue to the forces under his command, did he not take measures to meet, and if possible forestall them. He resolved to take the initiative, and endeavour to break up the combination which he saw gathering around him.

At this tremendous crisis in the fortunes of the British arms in northern Afghanistan, well was it for this country, that its army there was commanded by Sir Frederick Roberts. The more I read—the more I write about his actions, the farther I am inclined to measure his splendid capacity by, and place it on a par with that of England's greatest Commander, the Duke of Wellington. Indeed, in making comparison of the deeds of the two men, I recognize the same indomitable energy and fertility of resource, the same cool patience in the midst of difficulty, and the same promptness of execution under dangerous circumstances.

It was clear to Sir Frederick that once the concentration of the various tribes about him took place near the city, the positions he then held would be highly critical. He became aware of the intention of the Afghans by which the forces from the Logar, Zurnal, the Jadran and Wardak districts would unite with those from Kohistan which had for some time been in communication for this object, and, joined to

the intervening Ghilzais, seize the range of hills which extend from the city to Charasiab, including the Bala Hissar height and a high conical peak near called the Takht-i-Shah; the Kohistanis specially arranging to occupy the Asmai heights and hills north of the city, while the remainder took possession of those just named, and thus encompass the whole of the British positions.

In addition to this concentration, Sir Frederick knew that he should have the disaffected inhabitants of Kabul to harass him, who would rush out to join his other assailants. In the face, therefore, of this enormous and overpowering combination, what be judged how a handful of British soldiers under a capable General behaved themselves.

On the 8th of December Sir Frederick Roberts commenced his movements to prevent the concentration of the enemy, and if possible, break this up entirely. General Macpherson was directed with a force as follows, to proceed towards the west, via Killa Aushar and Argandi, in order to meet the enemy, and force them back on Maidan :—

4 guns F A Royal Horse Artillery,  
4 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery,  
6 companies of the 67th Regiment,  
509 men of the 3rd Sikhs,  
393 men of the 5th Goorkhas,  
1 squadron 9th Lancers,  
2 squadrons 14th Bengal Lancers.

On the following day General Baker was directed to proceed, via Charasiab and Lalidandur, towards Maidan, so that the force with him should place themselves across the line of the enemy after their defeat by General Macpherson. This command was composed as under :—

2½ squadrons 5th Punjaub Cavalry,  
4 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery,

25 men Sappers and Miners,  
450 men 92nd Highlanders,  
450 men 5th Punjaub Infantry.

To give time for the completion of this movement, and



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR H. T. MACPHERSON, V.C., K.C.B.  
*Bengal Staff Corps.*

draw the enemy more forward, General Macpherson was ordered to halt at Killa Aushar on the 9th, while on that day a cavalry reconnaissance was made by Colonel Lockhart, who soon discovered that large bodies of Afghans

were moving towards Kohistan from Argandi and Paghman. At the same time, Sir Frederick was informed of the collection of a large force of Kohistanis at Karez Mir, ten miles north of Kabul. The concentration of the tribes for the purpose of surrounding him had evidently commenced in earnest; therefore, feeling it necessary to disperse the Kohistanis before they could be joined by the Afghans coming from Maidan, General Roberts directed General Macpherson to change the direction of his march towards the Kohistanis, leaving his horse artillery and cavalry at Killa Aushar, as the Kohistan country was unsuited to their movements.

General Macpherson quickly acted on his Commander's orders, and arrived before the Kohistan force in time to find that the enemy from the west had not affected their junction with the Kohistanis. He at once attacked these latter promptly and vigorously. They were driven back with heavy loss, Major Fitzhugh of the 5th Goorkhas and six men only being wounded on the British side.

The enemy from Maidan, perceived in march along the distant valleys, seemed inclined to ascend the ridges of Surkh Kotal and assist the Kohistanis; but the British troops had possessed themselves of all the most commanding positions. Seeing this, and hearing of the defeat of their allies, they retreated towards Argandi.

Now, Sir Frederick, informed of this by heliograph, tried to cut the enemy's retreat and utterly disperse them. He strengthened the cavalry at Aushar by two squadrons from Sherpur, and ordered them to cut the enemy's line. The movement was unsuccessful; for, no sooner did the Afghans perceive the advance of the cavalry, than they at once took shelter in the villages about, and under the skirts of the hills which surround Paghman.

The troops bivouacked for the night in the open country



—General Baker, who had made steady progress, near Maidan ; and General Macpherson, at Kirez Mir.

Orders reached General Macpherson to follow the enemy retreating south and west by the Paghman Valley, and endeavour to drive them towards General Baker ; while he was told that Brigadier-General Massy would leave Killa Aushar at 9 a.m., and that he was to affect a junction with the Brigadier on the Argandi road.

General Massy had with him four guns of the Royal Horse Artillery and three squadrons of cavalry, consisting of two of the 9th Lancers, and one of the 14th Punjaub Lancers. His orders were, to advance from Killa Aushar by the road leading directly from the city of Kabul towards Argandi and Ghazni ; to proceed cautiously and quietly, feeling for the enemy ; to communicate with General Macpherson, and to act in conformity to that officer's movements ; and on no account to engage with the enemy until General Macpherson had commenced to do so.

General Massy, a brave and distinguished officer, seems to have either mistaken the purport of his orders, or acted upon what seemed to him to be a quicker way of gaining the Ghazni road ; for he started across country, intending to strike that road beyond the village of Killa Kazi. He sent away one troop of the 9th Lancers under Captain Chisholm, to ascertain the movements of General Macpherson, while a second troop was sent forward as an advanced guard.

General Massy neared Killa Kazi, when his advanced guard reported that the enemy were in great force on the hill, on either side of the Ghazni road, three miles in advance. The General, however, still moved on. Further reports soon reached him that the enemy were coming down from the hills into the plain to attack him. He then directed the Horse Artillery to open fire, in order to check

the Afghans, until he could hear of the advance of General Macpherson.

The guns commenced firing at 2,900 yards, but at this distance the shots appearing to have no effect, General Massy ordered the guns to move further on for 400 yards; but as the enemy still streamed down from the hill-sides and in crowds moved on, he again directed the Horse Artillery to go forward. They opened fire this time at 2,000 yards. Still the Afghans pressed onward in masses and confused lines, and thirty of the 9th Lancers were dismounted and opened fire with their carbines. But the enemy now had entire possession of the ground and were well forward, coming towards General Massy's little force with the utmost determination, notwithstanding the guns were pitching shot and shell into their midst, stretching many of them upon the ground killed or wounded. A force of Afghans, estimated at 10,000 men, were now steadily advancing upon the four guns and cavalry with General Massy.

At this moment Sir Frederick Roberts arrived upon the scene, having ridden out from Sherpur to assume command of what he had arranged should be the united forces of General Macpherson and General Massy.

In one moment he took in the whole position. His practised eye told him that at one stroke, unless something extraordinary should immediately happen in his favour, his well arranged plans for the dispersion of the enemy were defeated, and that a disaster or retreat was but too evident. General Massy had brought down upon his small force the whole mass of the retreating Afghans, before General Macpherson had time to unite with him and drive them back. The enemy were now marching in one unbroken body swiftly upon him to sweep his force away from their path and gain the city of Kabul.



With admirable promptitude Sir Frederick sent an Aide-de-camp to Sherpur at full speed, with directions for 200 of the 92nd Highlanders to come out at once and hold the gap at Deh Mozang, so as to prevent the enemy from gaining it first and passing through it, thus getting possession of the city. Then he gave General Massy orders to retire slowly, covering the guns and giving time for extrication from their now perilous position.

The cavalry went forward at a rapid trot, manœuvred towards the flanks of the advancing Afghans, and with a shout swept round and charged. The enemy nearest them recoiled at the onslaught, but were instantly steadied by masses in their rear, who, with excited yells, cut about them in every direction. The gaps created by the charge were quickly filled up, and again the Afghans ran on. Colonel Cleland was dangerously wounded, and several men were killed. The charges proved insufficient to stop the onward movement of the exultant lines of Afghans.

The guns went to the rear, and soon came to a dead stop at the edge of a deep water-course. General Roberts perceived their danger, for the enemy were now close, smiting right and left. He ordered an immediate charge by his horsemen as the last hope of saving the cannon.

Once more turned the Lancers, and in swift career rushed forward. They were instantly outflanked and intermingled with crowds of the enemy, who would not be denied. The cavalry had to retire, for the enemy pressed past them onwards in hundreds, and streamed towards the guns. These were immediately spiked, the horses untraced, and the guns abandoned.

Again and again the cavalry closed in and charged. Their swords swept around, creating many gaps in their enemy's ranks. To no purpose, for now the Afghans came on with frantic haste, firing rapidly, and scattered the

British Lancers. Horses rolled upon the plain in the agonies of death, or galloped about riderless in wild alarm. Cavalrymen fought on foot, unhorsed in the charge, retiring inch by inch. Numbers of instances of heroic conduct in saving life now took place. Troopers could be seen cutting their way through surrounding Afghans towards a fallen comrade, to save him, as he stood at bay dismounted.

In the midst of the turmoil and confusion around, Sir Frederick Roberts remained cool, and momentarily gave rapid orders to stem the living torrent that was rushing towards him. Now, he witnessed that which caused him afterwards to make a special report of the circumstance.

A man in black close-fitting coat, having on his head a helmet, yet with a white band around his throat, was near him—not a fighting soldier it was evident. He was a clergyman, a chaplain attached to the British force. He was the Reverend J. W. Adams. This Christian gentleman threw himself from his horse to help a wounded man of the 9th Lancers, whom he saw staggering towards him. The horse, alarmed at the struggling around him, started back, broke away, and was lost. The courageous clergyman helped forward the wounded man to further assistance, then made his way back on foot. He reached a deep nullah or water-course. He perceived at its bottom that which called for instant action. There lay two horses on their backs, with their riders underneath, in the water drowning. The horses were struggling and lashing out to get free, rolling upon the men under them at every movement. Down to the bottom, and up to the waist in water, rushed the gallant chaplain. He seized the reins of the nearest animal, and with herculean strength pulled him off his prostrate rider, who, half stunned and suffocated, yet managed to gain the bank. Again the clergyman turned

and repeated his deed for the remaining trooper. Both men were assisted not a moment too soon, for numbers of Afghans running up, barely gave the brave chaplain time to get away. He had saved the lives of two men, and prevented their being cut to pieces by the advancing enemy. This, too, at the imminent peril of his own life. The rules for granting the Victoria Cross were altered in his favour, and he was recently gazetted to his, indeed, well-merited reward.

In the meanwhile the 200 of the 92nd Highlanders had reached by a rapid march the gap at Deh Mozang. The enemy seeing it held by the determined attitude of these gallant soldiers, and finding their direct passage to the city thus baulked, swarmed up the slopes of the Takht-i-Shah, and occupied all the walled villages in Chardeh, thereby threatening the upper Bala Hissar, and rendering this position precarious, and by future movements ultimately untenable.

The picquets of the upper Bala Hissar had been strengthened by Sir Frederick Roberts during the day, in case of any misfortune to his arms. They were commanded by Captain R. E. C. Jarvis, and were attacked in the most determined manner the whole night; but the able officer in command repulsed the enemy with slaughter at every attempt to force the position.

During the progress of the events of the day, General Macpherson had marched from Sarkh Kotal, at 8 a.m., in a south-westerly direction towards Argandi; and, observing large bodies of Afghans crossing his front and proceeding towards Kabul, and hearing the firing of General Massy's guns on his left, wheeled his right, and at 12.30 p.m., about an hour after the retirement of that officer's force, found himself on nearly the same ground as that on which the action had been fought. Here he came upon the rear of the advancing enemy, and with a rough

charge dispersed them. Yet, not being aware of the result of the action, he halted at Killa Kazi, soon afterwards receiving an order from Sir Frederick Roberts, directing him to fall back upon the gap at Deh Mozang, which he reached at 7 p.m., thus further securing the approach to



COLONEL SIR C. M. MAC GREGOR K.C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E.

the city; but without avail, for hard fighting for several days was now the lot of the whole of the British troops about Kabul.

Colonel Macgregor, of General Robert's staff, observing later on in the day, and during a movement to meet some

infantry ordered from Sherpur, that the ground upon which the action had been fought was cleared of the enemy by the movements of General Macpherson's troops, collected some cavalry and artillerymen, and brought in the guns. They had been stripped of all their moveable fittings and their ammunition boxes emptied. They were unspiked and got ready for use on the following day.

General Robert's plans for dealing a blow at the combination of Afghans about him were, so far, frustrated and the moral effect of the enemy's dispersion lost. His position soon became most critical; for the Afghans had gained points of considerable vantage upon which a general concentration could be made by surrounding tribes.

The advanced guard of General Baker's force after dispersing the enemy who had attempted to capture his baggage, reached the gorge through which the road to Argandi runs, and here found both sides in possession of the enemy. It was necessary to dislodge them at once. This was accomplished in the most brilliant manner by the always foremost Major White at the head of his gallant 92nd.

After repeated attempts to communicate with him, General Baker was informed by Sir Frederick Roberts through the heliograph, of the events of the previous day, and that it was now necessary that the whole of the British troops should be at once concentrated in the neighbourhood of Kabul and cantonments at Sherpur, owing to General Roberts having resolved to make determined efforts to dislodge the enemy from the positions they had gained, and if possible, to still prevent their being joined by many thousands of others who would quickly swarm around on hearing of the success of their allies, and utterly surround him in overwhelming numbers. General Baker therefore at once returned.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE VICTORIA CROSS AROUND KABUL.

THE AFGHANS GAIN THE TAKT-I-SHAH—THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO CARRY THE POSITION—ITS FAILURE—THE SECOND ATTACK OF THE TAKT-I-SHAH—ITS SUCCESS—CHARGE OF GENERAL MASSY—ATTACK ON THE ASMAI HEIGHT—DESPERATE FIGHTING—RECAPTURE OF THE CONICAL HILL AND THE BRITISH SURROUNDED—RETIREMENT TO SHERPUR LINES—ATTACK UPON SHERPUR—REPULSE OF THE AFGHANS AND PURSUIT—RECIPIENTS OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.



THE enemy had now gained their object. They had reached and occupied the precipitous hill of the Takt-i-Shah overlooking and commanding the British position at Bala Hissar, thus having a formidable rallying point for the tribes from the Khost and surrounding districts. Sir Frederick Roberts position in and around Kabul was now seriously threatened ; indeed, if he could not succeed in driving out the enemy, it was untenable, and the command of the city was lost.



He resolved to make a determined effort to wrest the Afghan post from their grasp, and to still hold his power over the city; around which the storm quickly gathered in the shape of continuously increasing tribes, all eager for loot or murder in quest of it, while ostensibly urged on by fanatical zeal for the destruction of the infidel British.

Morning of the 13th of December broke, and with its advent a heavy day before the little army around Kabul. The energetic General Macpherson was directed to drive the enemy from the Takt-i-Shah. Colonel Money, of the 3rd Sikhs, assembled his men, 580 of all ranks, consisting of detachments of the 67th and 72nd British regiments and 3rd Sikhs, and from the ever-fighting 5th Goorkhas, with two guns of No. 1 Battery of mountain artillery.

The position was dangerously formidable, and the enemy had gathered upon its crest and rugged sides in great numbers, with every determination to hold what they had gained.

The crest of the Takt-i-Shah is difficult of approach. It is strewn with jagged rocks, intersected with scarps and rents in the hill side. To all these natural obstacles, the enemy had, quickly perceiving how advantageous the post was, built breastworks of stones, behind which they stood resolute and defended with the utmost firmness.

With incredible perseverance during nearly the whole day, the small force of British fought upwards from point to point; but the Afghan position on the crest was too strong to carry with the number of men then at hand, and General Roberts towards evening, ordered the attack to cease, and the men to hold the ground already won; as he saw that while the enemy could receive reinforcements from their line of communication, it would be impossible to effectually hold the post. Three non-commissioned officers greatly distinguished themselves this day. Their names

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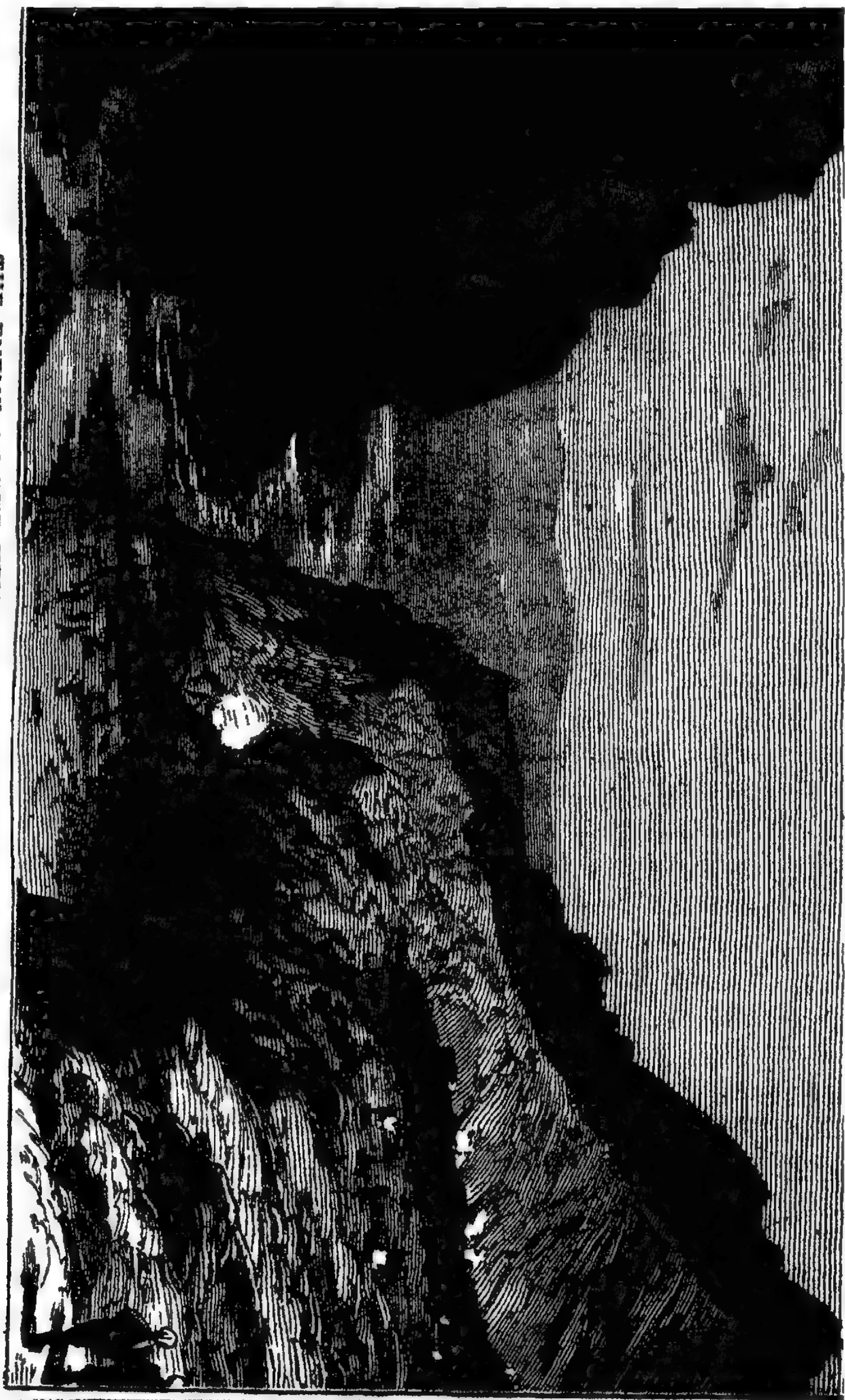
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THE ENEMY ON THE HEIGHTS ACROSS THE KABUL RIVER.



were Colour-Sergeant W. Macdonald, Sergeants Cox and McIlveen, all of the gallant 72nd Highlanders.

Night spread once more over the scene of the day's combat, and General Baker, who had come in, reported that large masses of the enemy had been in march past his flank towards the city. It was now clear that a few hours would decide if Kabul was to be in possession of the numerous tribes which surrounded it on every side. The troops rested on the ground which they had so far gained. The Bala Hissar heights were well guarded against surprise, and the morrow was looked forward to by all with no enviable feelings. Yet every man resolved to do his best.

The sun again rose over the city of Kabul, and as it appeared over the tops of the distant ridges, the troops fell in and stood to their arms for the final assault of the Takt-i-Shah.

Brigadier-General Baker had orders to proceed by the Bala Hissar road in the direction of Ben-i-Shahr, and seize the heights above that place, and operate on the front of the Takt-i-Shah from the south-east, with 8 guns, 1 squadron of the 5th Punjaub Cavalry, 6 companies of the 92nd Highlanders, 7 companies of the Guides Infantry, and 300 of the 3rd Sikhs; while General Macpherson was instructed to attack and act in conjunction with General Baker's force, from the direction north of the Bala Hissar.

The gallant body of men under General Baker marched quickly forward. They had scarcely cleared the Bala Hissar, before they observed large numbers of Afghans streaming out of the villages at the foot of the Ben-i-Shahr range. With a swift movement, urged by their excellent leader, and with fine judgment, the British gained the centre of the range and cut between the force at Takt-i-Shah and the enemy endeavouring to reach it, drove the latter aside, and then commenced their attack upon the

Takt-i-Shah itself, covered by the fire of the eight guns well directed by Majors Craster and Swinley.

The Afghans on the Takt-i-Shah now saw themselves assailed from two sides, and made a tremendous effort to throw back the British. They rushed down the mountain side with loud shouts and war cries, firing fast from every post of cover. But the gallant Major White of the 92nd, always foremost, led on his men with firmness. His splendid soldiers strode forward shooting quickly, and encouraged by Lieutenant St. John Forbes. The Afghans, gathering strength from every point, dashed upon the foremost sword in hand. A short but desperate struggle was seen. A hand-to-hand fight took place, and the courageous young Forbes, with Colour-Sergeant Drummond, lay dead upon the rocky ground, and many others staggered back severely wounded. Then the mass of Afghans in front, with flashing eyes and fierce aspect, waved their swords and threatened a terrible charge. Their bullets searched the ground around the Highlanders. They wavered slightly; but in a moment Lieutenant Dick Cunyngham rushed forward full in the fire of the enemy, shouting to his men to follow. The Afghans' shots whistled past him in hundreds, but as if he bore a charmed life, he went forward unhurt. Then with a cry of revenge, the Highlanders, with bayonets at the charge, hurled themselves upon their foes, carried them back in the rush, and won the first position. Cheer after cheer went up as their supporting comrades came on, now fighting every inch of the way, and ever pressing eagerly forward.

General Baker's force drove, and still drove back the Afghans until two-thirds of the ascent was won. But now their dusky native brethren of the 3rd Sikhs and 5th Goorkhas, under command of Major Sym, fought their way up the opposite side, and would not be denied. The enemy on the summit now began to give, perceiving that they were



being taken between two attacks. With a final and gallant rush the crest was gained by parties of the 72nd and 92nd from opposite directions.

Colour-Sergeant Yule of the 72nd was the first man up. Dashing forward, he struck to the earth some of the defenders, and captured two standards. The gallant fellow did not live to receive a well-merited reward for his courage, for he was killed the next day while again doing battle for his country in the same noble spirit of devotion. Such were the officers and men of the British army who fought around Kabul.

While this was going on, large bodies of the enemy were seen from the lower Bala Hissar in the act of advancing towards Ben-i-Shahr. These ran on, and occupied two fortified villages on the eastern side of the road. With quick decision, General Baker, on his return from the captured Takt-i-Shah, formed up his tired men and drove the enemy from one of these villages; while the other was taken by a detachment of 5th Punjaub Infantry, which Sir Frederick Roberts had sent from Sherpur to keep open communications with General Baker.

General Roberts had been keenly watching the varying phases of the attack on the Takt-i-Shah. He saw its success, and he observed the masses of the enemy as they streamed around General Baker. He sent the cavalry brigade at them, under General Massy. With a wide sweep this General took his men forward and caught the Afghans. With a grand charge he sent them flying over the intervening plain. Yet the Afghans resisted fiercely, and Captain Butson, who headed the 9th Lancers, was killed, and many officers and men were severely wounded.

Now the day was ended, and its results, so far, were highly satisfactory. General Baker's force was recalled to cantonments. General Macpherson was ordered to occupy



the Bala Hissar heights, while the 5th Goorkhas held the captured Takt-i-Shah.

The British were now in possession of the southern range of heights nearest to their position. The advance of the tribes in that direction had been stopped. On the plain below they had been scattered and severely dealt with by the British cavalry. The Bala Hissar heights were in General Roberts' hands, as well as the hill of Takt-i-Shah.

So far, all was successful, yet at great sacrifice; and the General hoped that the loss inflicted upon the enemy had been so heavy, and their combination so broken up, that the various tribes would disperse and return to their homes. The hope was vain; for at daylight on the morning of the 14th large numbers of men with numerous standards were seen to be in occupation of a hill on the Kohistan road, a mile from the Asmai range; and, as day advanced, these passed in numbers from this hill and along the road from Kohistan to the summit of the Asmai heights, being joined by many other Afghans from Chardeh and the city of Kabul. It was evident that, defeated in their operations on the west and south, the enemy had pertinaciously determined to alter their points of concentration, and deliver their attack from the north-west.

One more effort was resolved upon. General Baker was ordered to attack the eastern slope of the Asmai heights. This was commenced by the seizure of a conical hill which formed a shoulder of the Aliabad Kotal, by which General Roberts placed himself on the Afghan line of communications and supports, as well as prevented the force on the Asmai heights from receiving reinforcements from the Kohistan road.

Now, General Baker moved forward with bodies of the 72nd, 92nd, and Guides infantry to the attack. Colonel Jenkyns, after placing a force on the conical hill for

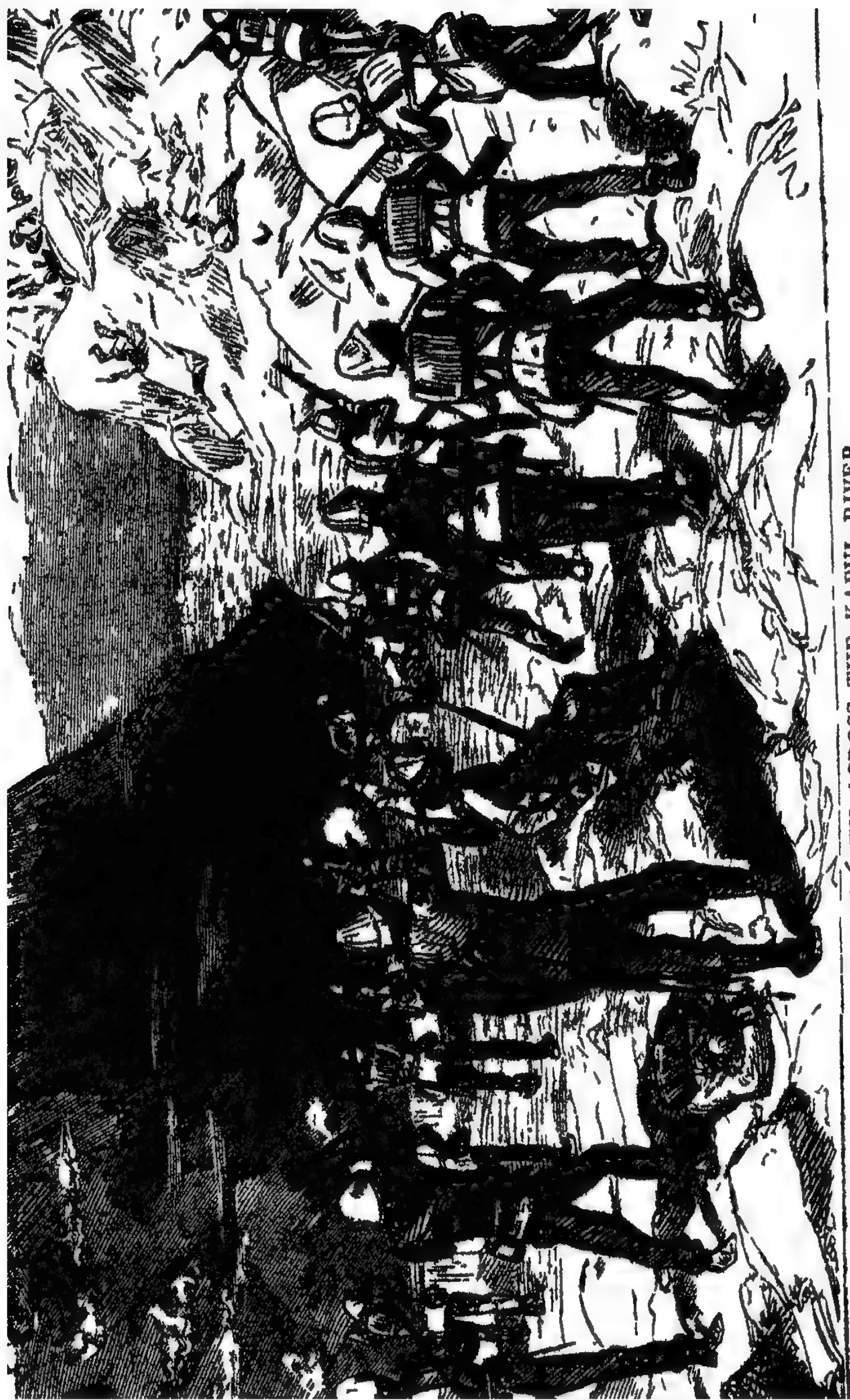
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THE 67TH ACROSS THE KABUL RIVER.

its security, moved forward to assail the main body of the enemy on the Asmai heights. The Colonel left the conical hill in charge of 74 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Highlanders and 60 of the Guides who had led the successful attack upon it; and, with the remainder of his force, pushed on to dislodge the Afghans from the Asmai range; the advance being led by Colonel Brownlow. The eastern part of the enemy's position was quickly carried, when General Baker directed the conical hill to be reinforced by four mountain guns and 100 men of the 5<sup>th</sup> Punjab Infantry, so as to support the main advance, and engage the attention of the enemy in the Chardeh and Kohistan direction.

The advance up the Asmai height continued, supported by the fire of the four guns on the conical hill, under Major Craster, and by four guns of the Royal Horse Artillery under Major Pipon near the south-west corner of the Sherpur cantonment, assisted by four mountain guns under Captain Morgan from the Bala Hissar hill, and by two companies of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which crossed the Kabul river for the purpose.

The ground towards the Asmai heights was most difficult, and the enemy fought every inch of it with the greatest obstinacy, and in large numbers. The Highlanders and Guides pressed forward with undaunted ardour, driving back the Afghans step by step, yet with many falling killed and wounded. They gained the highest peak, where a number of Ghazis stood sword in hand, ready to die to the last man. Here a terrific struggle took place, the Ghazis being despatched one by one with much difficulty. Corporal Sellars of the 7<sup>th</sup> Highlanders was the first man at the top. Rushing on in advance of his comrades, a Ghazi struck full at his head. The cut was parried, and a bayonet thrust given in return. The Ghazi turned aside the point, and, with a swift movement of his sword, cut the gallant

Highlander in the arm ; yet the brave man rushed upon his adversary, and in a death struggle both rolled upon the ground, the Afghan being quickly killed. The corporal was specially recommended by Sir Frederick Roberts for the Victoria Cross. His determined courage excited the admiration of all who witnessed it. Sergeant John McLaren and Corporal E. McKay, 92nd, also greatly distinguished themselves in the last rush.

Now came the crisis ; for immediately could be seen ominous flashes from the heliograph with General Macpherson, communicating the fact that enormous bodies of Afghans were moving northwards from Indiki with the intention of effecting a junction with the forces which still held the hills towards Kohistan, and evidently having for their object the re-taking of the original position. Simultaneous flashes of light came from General Baker and Colonel Ross, whom Sir Frederick had sent over the spurs of the conical hill to watch the movements of the enemy.

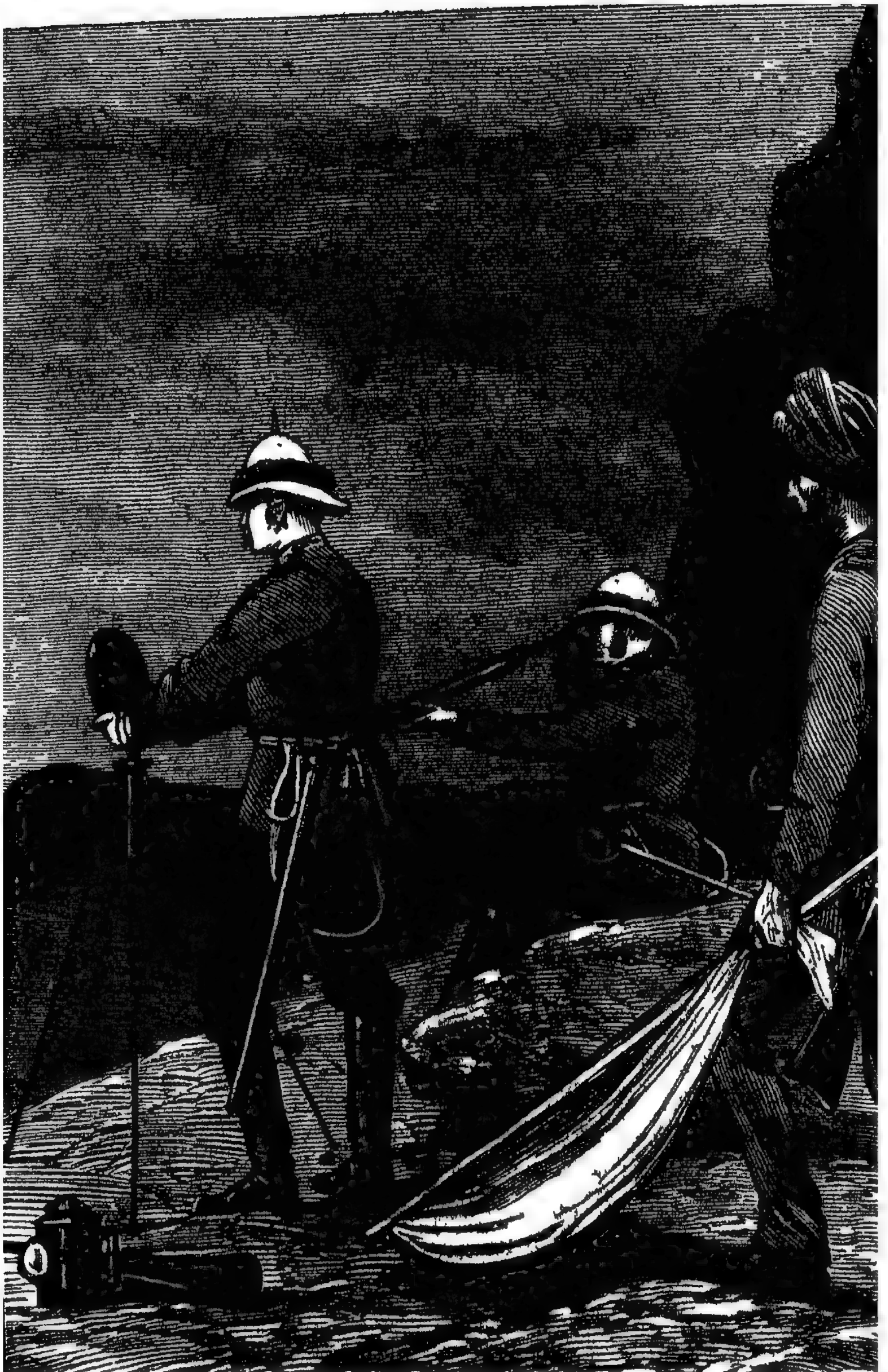
Quickly General Roberts observed that the small body of troops upon the conical hill was being greatly pressed by a large body of Afghans who had advanced to its base, and General Baker's heliograph flashed for further reinforcements to be sent to this point. But before these could be ordered off, the enemy had, with a tremendous rush, gained possession of it in overwhelming numbers.

The gallant force left to defend the hill stood their ground manfully, but were pushed back by sheer weight of numbers. Slowly they retired, with their faces ever towards the enemy. Captain Spens of the 72nd called upon his men to stand fast. He was shot down at once, and many with him, leaving in the enemy's hands two guns of the mountain battery ; so sudden, and so terrible had been the Afghan onslaught.

While this was going on, large numbers of Afghans were







observed to be collecting on the Siah Sang, and proceeding round the east flank of the Sherpur cantonments that lay in the direction of Kohistan. A charge was made on a party of these, numbering over 500 men, by Captain Vousden of the 5th Punjab cavalry, who swept forward and dashed into the middle of the mass with only twelve of his men; dispersed them, and with his own hand killed five of their number in single combat. This was a splendid and self-sacrificing act, and justly did this gallant officer earn the coveted distinction of the Victoria Cross, to which he was recommended by his excellent chief, Sir Frederick Roberts.

It was now clearly evident that the last effort to break up the Afghan combination for surrounding the British force had failed, and immediate steps were taken to secure its safety; as General Roberts quickly received further information from the signal station at the Bala Hissar that still larger bodies of the enemy were advancing from the north, south, and west. In fact, there were now in the field, for the purpose of destroying his army, upwards of 60,000 well-armed and well-equipped men.

Heliographic communications were therefore at once sent to all commanders of isolated and other positions that they were to concentrate in the Sherpur lines. This was accomplished by all in charge of troops with consummate tact, coolness, and skill; that of the retirement from the eastern face of the Asmai height especially being carried out under a heavy and continuous fire from the enemy. Captain Hammond of the Guides here greatly distinguished himself, by remaining with a few men on the ridge and checking by a rapid fire the advance of large numbers of Afghans who now swarmed up its face until they were within thirty yards of his party, before he gave the order to retire. One of his brave soldiers was shot as he turned to obey his captain's order; but the gallant officer stopped

and turned in the face of the advancing Afghans, and although they were close upon him, firing heavily, he helped the stricken man down the mountain side.

The Sherpur lines reached by all ; rapid completion for a prolonged defence was instantly made, and every man was assigned to his post and duty. The discipline was supreme. The firmness of every soldier present, proved his faith in the General who was in chief command.

A perfect description of the now celebrated and historical lines of Sherpur would be too lengthy to be here given. Suffice it to say, that in shape they formed a parallelogram of various lengths of faces from two thousand to one thousand yards, and having on the northern side a large lake or "*jheel*" which on that side prevented the approach of an enemy ; while on the opposite, or southern side, was a continuous and massive mud wall ten feet high, with three gateways, flanked by circular bastions. On the western sides similar walls extended ; but on the east side the plan of construction had not been completed, therefore the defences in that spot, and indeed along the whole line, had been considerably added to. This work was done under the superintendence of Colonel Perkins, Royal Engineers.

The forethought of an able General which had stored this place with provisions, ammunition, and appliances for defence in view of possible contingencies, is in parallel to that of the Duke of Wellington during his campaign against the French in Spain of 1810 ; where, under somewhat identical circumstances, he constructed, and fell back upon the lines of Torres Vedras on the confines of Portugal, against which the French beat their heads in vain for more than a month, and then retired, baffled, beaten, and disheartened.

Sir Frederick Roberts was well aware that the enemy, once concentrated, would not leave him long without a

tremendous effort to capture his new position. Rapid work was therefore urged forward in preparation for the coming storm. In a few days all was in readiness, and as far as possible, arrangements were made, for keeping up communication with India ; the enemy meanwhile taking up positions in the surrounding gardens and villages, and keeping up a desultory fire on the camp. Yet the garrison of the lines still made cavalry reconnaissances and dislodged the enemy from various points which they had taken up to harass the defenders.

General Roberts had his paid spies, and was informed every night that an attack upon his position was contemplated ; but it was not until the 21st of December that the enemy showed signs of increased activity. On that day large numbers of Afghans passed out of Kabul, and, marching round the position, occupied numerous forts to the eastward ; and it soon became apparent that the enemy were preparing for an assault from that quarter. At the same time Sir Frederick was informed that they were preparing a number of ladders for escalading the defences.

The night of the 22nd passed quietly in the lines, yet the troops in Sherpur plainly heard loud songs and cries in the surrounding villages. Sir Frederick had received information that the assault would be delivered on the 23rd of December, this being the feast of the "Muharran." The General therefore ordered all troops to be under arms at an early period of the morning of this day. The information conveyed to him was correct, for the appearance of the signal fires on the Asmai height told that the attack was about to commence ; and heavy firing was almost immediately heard against the southern and eastern faces of the defence ; while a large mass of the enemy provided with scaling ladders, advanced against the walls on the south.

The assault was strongly delivered, and the fight raged



incessantly from early morning until 10 a.m. Attempt after attempt was made by enormous bodies of Afghans to carry the walls by escalade, the enemy many times reaching the abattis. Each time, with indomitable resolution and the utmost coolness, the British troops repulsed the assaults with severe loss to the assailants ; when at 11 o'clock, a lull took place for a short period.

The enemy seemed to waver and hesitate. Then Sir Frederick determined to deliver a severe counter stroke, and directed four guns of horse artillery and the 5th Punjaub cavalry to move out by a gorge in the Bemari heights, which formed a portion of the defence, and attack the enemy in flank. With a rapid trot the guns and cavalry went forward. Fire was opened and the cavalry swept on, when at once the enemy broke and fled in all directions. Brigadier Massy was ordered out at the instant with every available horseman. With eagerness now, the whole of the British cavalry filed out of the cantonments, and were soon in rapid pursuit of the retreating Afghans. Coming swiftly up with these, they charged the retiring multitude, and scattered them with terrible execution over the surface of the land.

Two gallant officers died this day in their country's service—Captain Dundas, Royal Engineers, who had moved out to destroy some villages to the south which had formed heads of attack, and Lieutenant Nugent of the same corps, both of whom were killed by the premature explosion of a mine. Around all the villages the cavalry pursued, striking down in their progress the armed Afghans who fled swiftly before them or ran for shelter to the distant hill-sides.

The Afghans accepted their disastrous defeat as the stroke of fate ; for, as daylight dawned the next morning, not a man of them could be found in the adjacent villages. All had dispersed to their homes. So precipitate had been this

flight, that the Afghans left their dead unburied where they fell, and many of the enemy by mid-day were twenty-five miles from Kabul, having become acquainted that reinforcements were already near ; for Brigadier Gough's brigade had arrived the day before within six miles of Sherpur. Some forts outside were occupied, and the next day General Macpherson moved out to cover the advance of General Gough.

Therefore, while the people of this country were preparing, in all the delight of social intercourse and general good-will, the festivities of Christmas period ; their valiant brothers were spending it in terrible combats and fearful hardships around the Sherpur cantonments ; in the burial of English and Native dead soldiers ; in attending to wounded men ; and by the British cavalry, in active pursuit of enemies during a severe snowstorm.

Two very opposite modes of spending Christmas time, it must be admitted.

After this, General Roberts held the position of Sherpur and partially re-occupied Kabul, the thousands of plundering Afghans who had taken possession of it having fled with the remainder. Here the General awaited the arrival of reinforcements and the course of events for future operations.

For consummate judgment, the dispositions and selection of positions were unsurpassed in modern warfare. Sir Frederick Roberts' firm determination to hold his ground—his admirable forethought and arrangements—the confidence in him reposed by the whole of his subordinates and his men—the capacity which he showed for grasping the difficulties of his position at critical moments—his watchful eye on the field of battle and promptness in the moment of action—his fortitude and patience in the midst of danger ; prove him to be, on the whole, the most brilliant commander



the British army has recently produced. His country has scarcely acknowledged the great military services which he has rendered to it, by that measure of justice which they honestly deserve.

These remarks are founded upon this British General's achievements. The opinion thus expressed, is without prejudice to the high reputation of Sir Garnet Wolseley, Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Samuel Brown, and other well-known English Generals, whose capacities for administration and military operations of magnitude, are unquestionable.

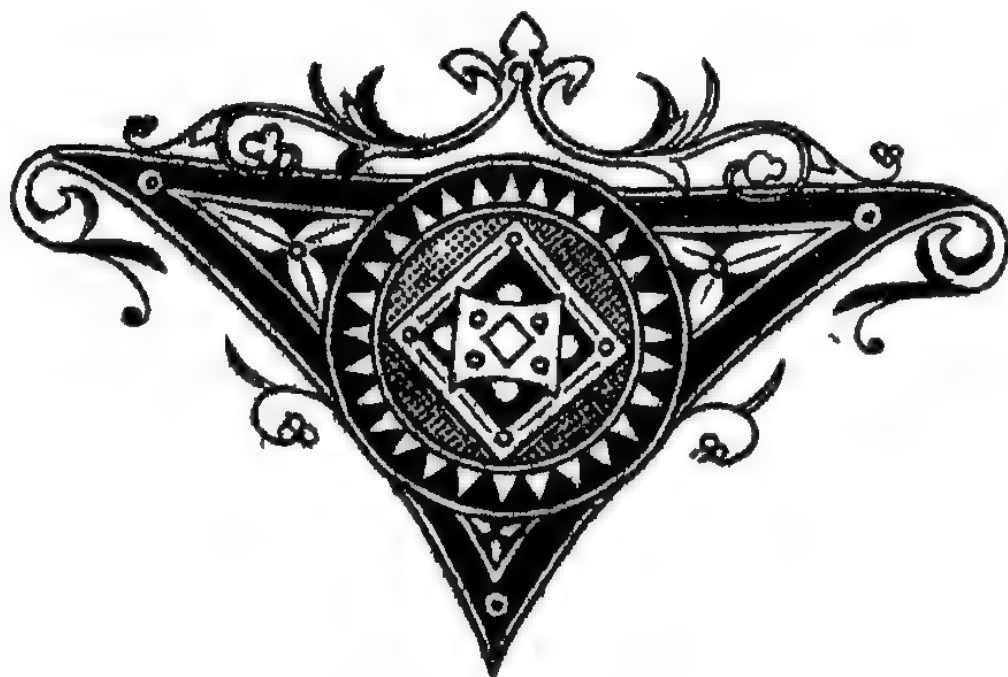
All present at Kabul bore themselves in this severe crisis with heroic, yet not unparalleled bravery; for British soldiers have done equal deeds in former days and in other lands with such firm and resolute courage as to excite the admiration of their foes, and make them feel, in the words of that soldier historian Sir W. Napier, "with what stern majesty the British soldier fights." The well-trained and well-seasoned British soldiers of the present day do no discredit to the actions of their forefathers. It is merely a question of training and stamina, with good leadership. The courage is the same, and ever will be, in men, not in boy soldiers.

Captain Vousden, Captain Hammond, Lieutenant Dick Cunyngham, and Corporal Sellar have just—and only just, received the Victoria Cross for their conspicuous bravery during the severe fighting around Kabul and at Sherpur.

The War Office is not by any means notorious for its expedition in the conduct of the affairs of the British army. These officers and non-commissioned officer have been kept waiting for the grant of their well-earned and well-merited distinction for *eighteen months*!

It is assuring to note that the Generals commanding in Afghanistan, lost no time in ample recognition of the courage of those who in *their* opinion ought to be granted the Vic-

toria Cross. It remained for the executive in London to take time—and what a time!—for due consideration of the General's recommendations. During this period of eighteen months, the men who had nobly risked their lives over and over again at the sword's point, or at the muzzles of their enemy's rifles, were allowed to remain without public acknowledgment of their just claims. What an encouragement for the British soldier to do his duty! Some day, it is to be hoped, there will be a radical change for the better, in the administration of the British military forces.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE VICTORIA CROSS AT THE BATTLE OF MAIWAND.

DAYLIGHT ON THE 27TH OF JULY, 1880, AT KHUSKH-I-NAKHU—AYOUB KHAN—PLAN OF THE AFGHAN CAMPAIGN, 1878-9—FALL OF THE FORT OF ALI MUSJID IN THE KYBER PASS—ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH TO JELLALABAD — GENERAL ROBERTS REACHES THE SHATURGARTEN ABOVE KABUL—SIR DONALD STEWART OCCUPIES KANDAHAR—FLIGHT OF SHERE ALI—NEGOTIATIONS WITH YAKOUB KHAN—THE TREATY OF GANDAMUK—SIR LOUIS CAVAGNARI APPOINTED RESIDENT AT KABUL.



THE most brilliant sun that ever rose to flood an Indian landscape with its glorious light, was well above the line of hills which marked the distant horizon, as a busy scene could be observed close to and around the village of Khushk-i-Nakhud, forty miles on the direct road from Kandahar to Herat, about five o'clock in the morning of the 27th of July, 1880.

The rising orb, still low in the heavens, looked like a

vast ball of glowing fire, from which shot broad beams of golden brightness that spread their radiance over hill and valley. So lustrous, and so resplendent on this morning, it seemed to awake all nature to joyous gladness. The early morning's air was sweet and cool ; its breath gave life and vigour to every animate being around.

Yet was this refulgent globe as it gazed the azure sky above, to look down, like many and many a previous morning's sun, upon a fatal field of death and ruin. It was the last which many of those who watched its rising, ever cast their eyes upon.

A busy scene indeed ! yet one upon which all who were engaged in connection with it looked seriously. The cheerfulness which this lovely daybreak appeared to create within the peaceful glades around, seemed not to possess the human beings who appeared in such activity about the village of Khushk-i-Nakhud.

A stranger to the thoughts and intentions of those who were in rapid movement to and fro about the place, could never have imagined that the aspect of so gay a landscape would have been darkened before the day was spent, by a terrible view of war, with all its shocking sights of fierceness, ferocity, and death in every shape.

The bright forenoon of the 27th of July, and the events of the day which followed, will be remembered by those who remained at its close, and who may yet be living, so long as existence lasts within them, as that of one of England's most bloody disasters.

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Ayoub Khan, who, on the flight of his late father Shere Ali, had come from Persia and assumed the rulership of the province and city of Herat, had long been contemplating a serious hostile effort to reach Kandahar, and, if possible,

Kabul, for the purpose of ousting the British force from the occupation of those cities; or of raising the whole surrounding country against the British and in his own favour. He had gathered about him various influential Afghan personages who were, and had been all through, highly antagonistic, implacable in their enmity, and in their persistent endeavours to attack and defeat the British arms at every opportunity that offered itself.

Chastised and severely dealt with in the field as these hostile chiefs had been, they still lost no occasion to either secretly or openly keep the different tribes which inhabited the country, in a state of ferment against the British. Several of these chiefs, having found that single-handed they had been unable to cope successfully with those who had occupied and still held the most important cities and districts of Afghanistan, made their way to Herat, and received a ready welcome from its ruler, who had from the very first held aloof from any friendly recognition or intercourse with any of the British commanders, and had openly expressed his firm resolve to obtain the throne which had become vacant by the death of the late Emeer; notwithstanding such would involve a determined attempt to drive out the British from Afghanistan.

Difficulties of various natures had for some time prevented the ruler of Herat from carrying out his threatened resolution. Of these, one was the want of money to raise and equip a sufficient force with which to undertake the work; another was the want of unity amongst those to whom he looked for support and assistance in the enterprise; as each had some specific object to gain, and all were jealous and suspicious of each other.

Upon the refusal of the Emeer Shere Ali, in the latter part of the year 1878, to agree to the demand of the British Government that it should have a Resident at Kabul; and









the decision had been settled to bring him to his senses by a display of force, war was declared, and the frontier of Afghanistan was crossed on the 20th of November, 1878.

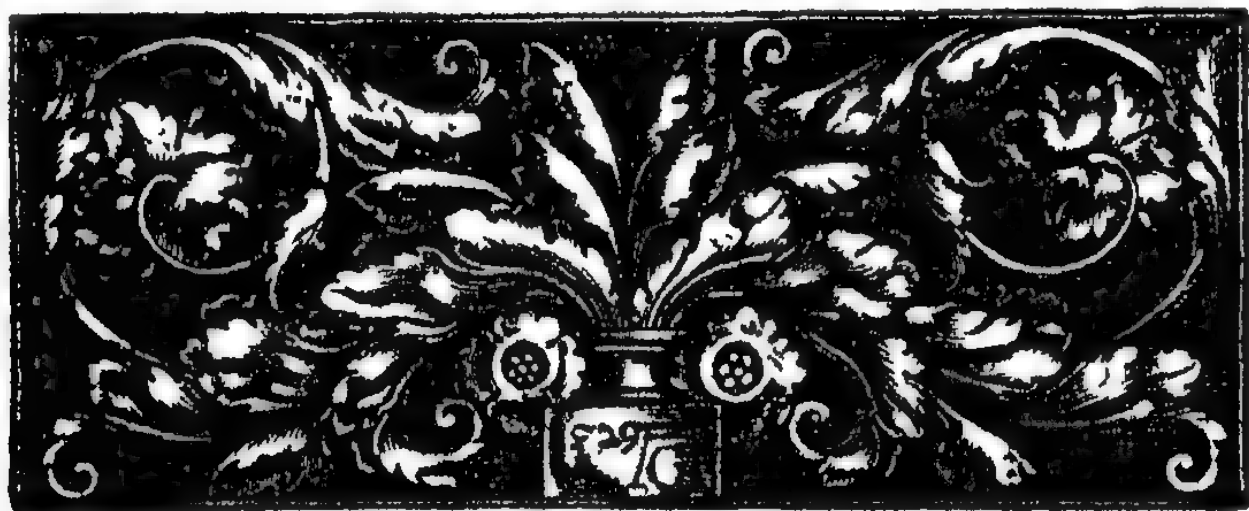
The plan of military operations with this object was, shortly expressed, to advance on the southern side by the Kojak and Bolan passes to Kandahar and occupy that city; and on the northern, to push forward through the Khurum valley and Kyber passes and occupy the Shaturgarten pass close to and dominating Kabul, and take possession of Jellalabad, which would thus threaten Kabul from the north.

The fort of Ali Musjid in the Kyber pass fell on the 22nd of November, 1878; this was quickly followed by the taking of the Peiwar Khotal in the Khurum valley, the advance of General Roberts to the Shaturgarten, by that of General Brown to Jellalabad, and by the rapid progress of Sir Donald Stewart's force towards Kandahar.

The Emeer fled his capital; but previous to this, he released his son Yakoub Khan from prison; invested him with supreme power; and wrote to the British Government that he had done so, declaring that he was about to proceed to St. Petersburg to lay his case before the Emperor of Russia. He died before reaching far upon his journey, and Yakoub Khan was now virtually Emeer.

Negotiations were opened with him by the British; he met a military and political commission at or near Ganda muk, beyond the Shaturgarten, and on the 26th of May, 1879, ratified a treaty in which was a clause (article 4) granting the demand for which the war was undertaken.

Sir Louis Cavagnari, the new Resident, entered Kabul with a proper staff and escort, and General Roberts occupied himself with conducting operations in the Khost valley for the purpose of keeping in order the turbulent tribes of that district.



## CHAPTER X.

YAKOUB KHAN'S DOUBLE DEALING—ATTACK UPON THE RESIDENCY AT KABUL, AND DEATH OF SIR LOUIS CAVIGNARI AND ESCORT—SURRENDER OF THE EMEER TO THE BRITISH—OCCUPATION OF KABUL—THE BALA HISSAR BLOWN UP—THREATENING ATTITUDE OF THE KABULESE—WITHDRAWAL OF SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS—BRITISH DIFFICULTY OF HOLDING AFGHANISTAN—PREPARATIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF GENERAL STEWART FROM KANDAHAR TO KABUL.



**S**EEMING to acquiesce in the advent of his brother Yakoub Khan to power, yet holding himself perfectly independent, he had sent two Heratee regiments to Kabul as his quota of support to his relative. Whether with secret orders it is difficult to say; but after events appeared to prove that such must have been given, for these regiments, under pretence of a clamour for arrears of pay from their Emeer, suddenly on the 3rd of September,

1879, attacked the Residency in which the new British representative had taken up his abode, totally destroyed it and massacred this officer, Sir Louis Cavagnari, and the whole of his party in the most ferocious manner.

Small satisfaction was obtained from the new Emeer of Afghanistan for the diabolical murders which had been perpetrated ; and, owing to his equivocal conduct and explanations, strong suspicions of connivance at the outrage had been entertained by the Indian authorities ; and at last it seemed to these only too clear, that if the Emeer had not actually acquiesced in the affair, he had personally taken but slight measures, if any at all, to stop it at the moment at which it occurred.

Without doubt the Emeer Yakoub Khan saw that the British had well-founded suspicions as to his faith towards them, and observed their determination to have him closely watched. He knew that directly they saw that he made a clear opening for a well-grounded charge against his truth and honesty of purpose, they would not hesitate to act in a manner which would result in his immediate deposition, or in something even worse.

Surrounded by influential Afghan personages, many of whom were entirely strange to him—having, from the circumstances of his exile, but few firm personal adherents who were devoted to him, he was to a great extent in constant fear of spies about him who would report through their agents any double-dealing acts towards the British. Watched also by the spies of Ayoub Khan, he was altogether, particularly after the disastrous attack upon the Residency and the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his party, in a very difficult, not to say perilous position.

Finding, in addition to this, that his authority in the city of Kabul was ill-sustained—that he could command but little which would help to keep him in his new position—that even the British who had helped to place him in his post

held him suspected—surrounded at last by difficulties which he could not overcome—and seeing that, owing to the close proximity of the British force, the secret aspirations of his mind to sweep them off the face of the earth could not be fulfilled by means secret or open, he determined to resign, and trust to a better opportunity. He did so, and placed himself with seeming innocence in British hands.

The Indian authorities were only too glad that he performed this act, as it would have been found impossible for them to have allowed Yakoub Khan to retain the Emeership for one moment after the true and actual facts connected with his complicity in the murder of the British representative had come to light before the world. He was therefore at once taken charge of, placed under a strong escort and brought to India, where he now is under safe surveillance ; and it is hoped that this truculent man will never again be allowed to work his treacherous machinations against the British Government, or for the destruction of British lives.

As soon as Sir Louis Cavagnari and his party had been murdered, it was determined to occupy Kabul for the better security of British interests. Therefore, General Roberts advanced and took possession of the city with an adequate military force. The Bala Hissar or Arsenal blew up mysteriously. The attitude of the Kabulese, the mutinous troops left in the city, and the tribes surrounding it, soon became so threatening, that with sagacious resolution Sir Frederick Roberts took possession of the Sherpur lines a short distance from the place, and by which, while more secure in position, he could still dominate the city and resume possession at an opportune moment.

Events justified the action of Sir Frederick, and after determined efforts to destroy or oust him from his post at Sherpur had failed, the city was ultimately reoccupied and its affairs administered to.



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR SAMUEL BROWN,  
V.C., K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

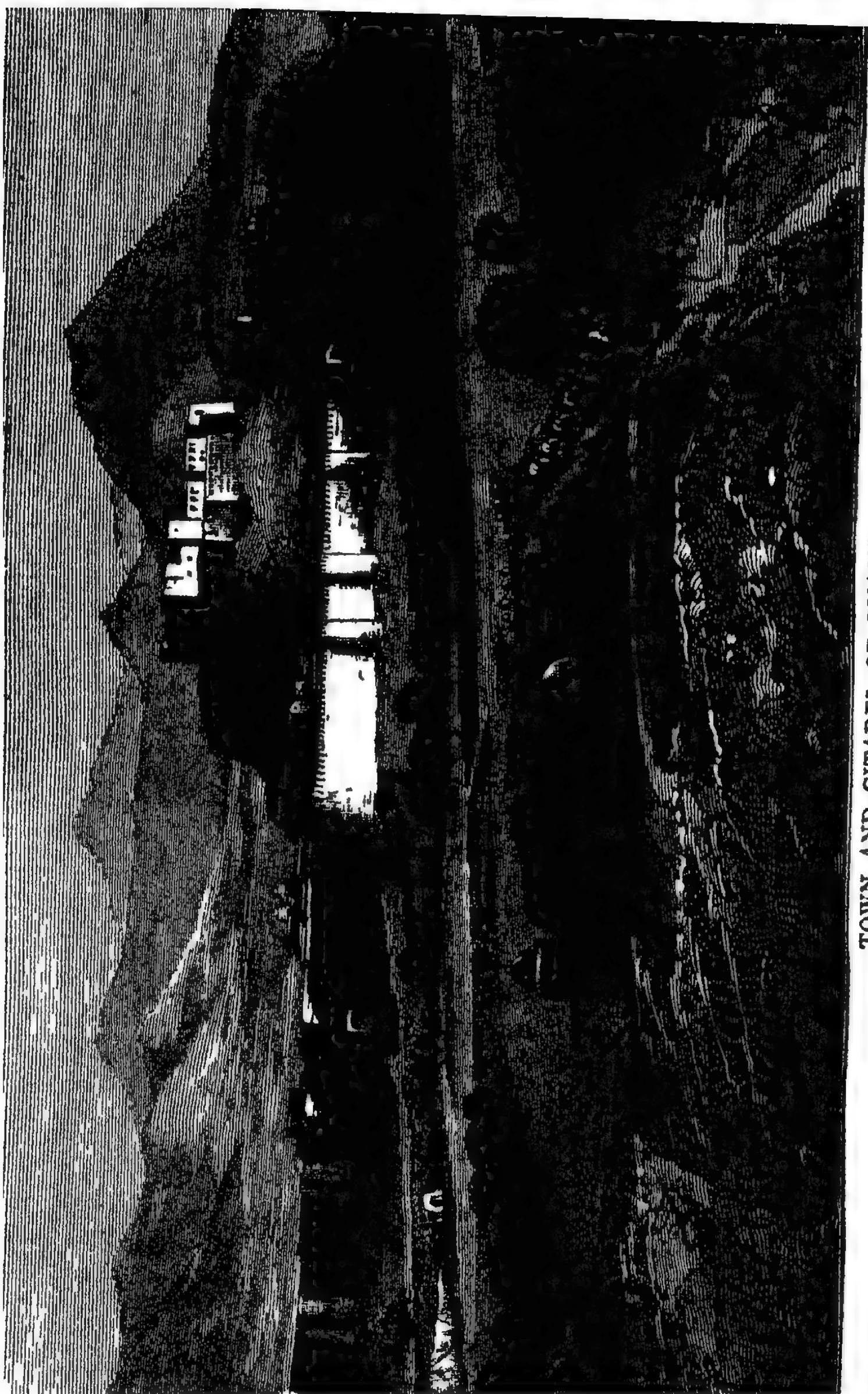


- From the very first moment of Yakoub Khan's elevation to the post of Emeer, Ayoub Khan, his brother, had brooded over the fact, and had without doubt vowed secret determinations, not only against the Emeer himself, but against those who had helped him to the position. He now began to contemplate a serious attempt to get possession of the Kandahar district, and from thence push forward to Ghazni with the object of raising the powerful tribe of Ghilzais in his favour ; and, if possible, in conjunction with Mahomed Jan, the most implacable of all the enemies of Great Britain in Afghanistan, endeavour to get rid of the British and place himself upon the throne.

For some time previous to January, 1880, the British Government then in office had felt that it was a difficult task to hold so extensive a country, and inhabited by such a turbulent people of mixed races, all more or less hostile and jealous of interference ; and it perhaps cannot be controverted that if a ruler could have been obtained at that time, chosen by the principal Afghan chiefs, and who would have given guarantees of friendly intentions towards Great Britain ; a withdrawal of all, or nearly all, the British troops in Afghanistan would have taken place, as the object for which the war had been undertaken had been gained.

Shere Ali had been punished by defeat for his breach of faith. He had fled to the protection of Russia—that power which had led him on ; had drawn him into insulting the British Government, and into refusing it that which he had granted to Russia, namely, a Residency in his capital to a British representative. Shere Ali had died whilst under Russian influences, but no man had been found to replace his successor Yakoub Khan, who had resigned ; and the whole country was in a most unsettled condition. It was therefore considered impossible to leave it so, or in such a state of anarchy as would give that neighbouring





TOWN AND CITADEL OF GHAZNI.

power whose active interference had been the cause of the British occupation, the excuse for stepping in, either by intrigue or otherwise.

Another aspirant, too, for the vacant Emeership had appeared in the far distance, and had announced his intention to approach Kabul with the object of raising his standard of claim for the post. A kinsman also of Ayoub Khan of Herat was the new aspirant, one Abdhurhan Khan, who had for some years been an exile from Afghanistan, and a pensioner of Russia, resident in Turkistan. While, therefore, matters were in this state, the British Government, on the proposition of the military authorities of India, sanctioned a certain movement of troops; and as this movement directly led to the event at Maiwand and others which followed, it must be described.

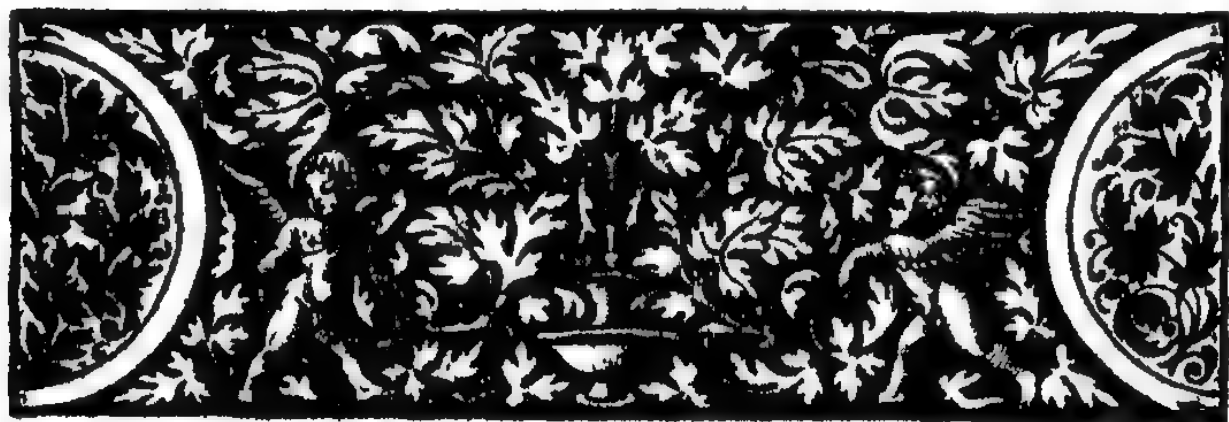
The base of the triangle which formed the area of the British operations, lay from Kabul to Kandahar. The line of this base ran through Ghazni, the chief town of the Ghilzais. During the whole time of the British occupation, the entire country through which this line passed, had, in the most hostile manner, constantly formed bands for the purpose of attacking outposts and interfering with the lines of communications with the British bases of supply in India. It was from Ghazni, lying about midway between Kabul and Kandahar, and the centre of all Ghilzai intrigue, that all orders for attacking the British emanated. This was undoubtedly proved by the severe engagements at Shah-jui, near Khelat-i-Ghilzai, at Charasiab, and other places along the line.

It was thought, and with good reason, that, militarily, the positions which the British forces had taken up near Kabul and Kandahar on the base line, as well as on the lines of communication, could not be secure so long as Ghazni and its surrounding country were held in force by influential

chiefs, hostile, and thirsting for blood and plunder; and who could constantly organize heads of attack upon the British outposts, and against its communications with India.

For military as well as political reasons, therefore, it was thought necessary to traverse this base line from end to end. The entire force under Sir Donald Stewart at Kandahar was, after mature consideration, given orders to march to Kabul; and a force from Kabul was directed to meet it, join hands, and then form plans for a complete re-arrangement of the troops in the field, particularly in and around Kabul; Sir Donald Stewart's division at Kandahar to be replaced by a small one from Bombay, as Kandahar, owing to the wise government of this able man, was considered to be in a state of quietude.





## CHAPTER XI.

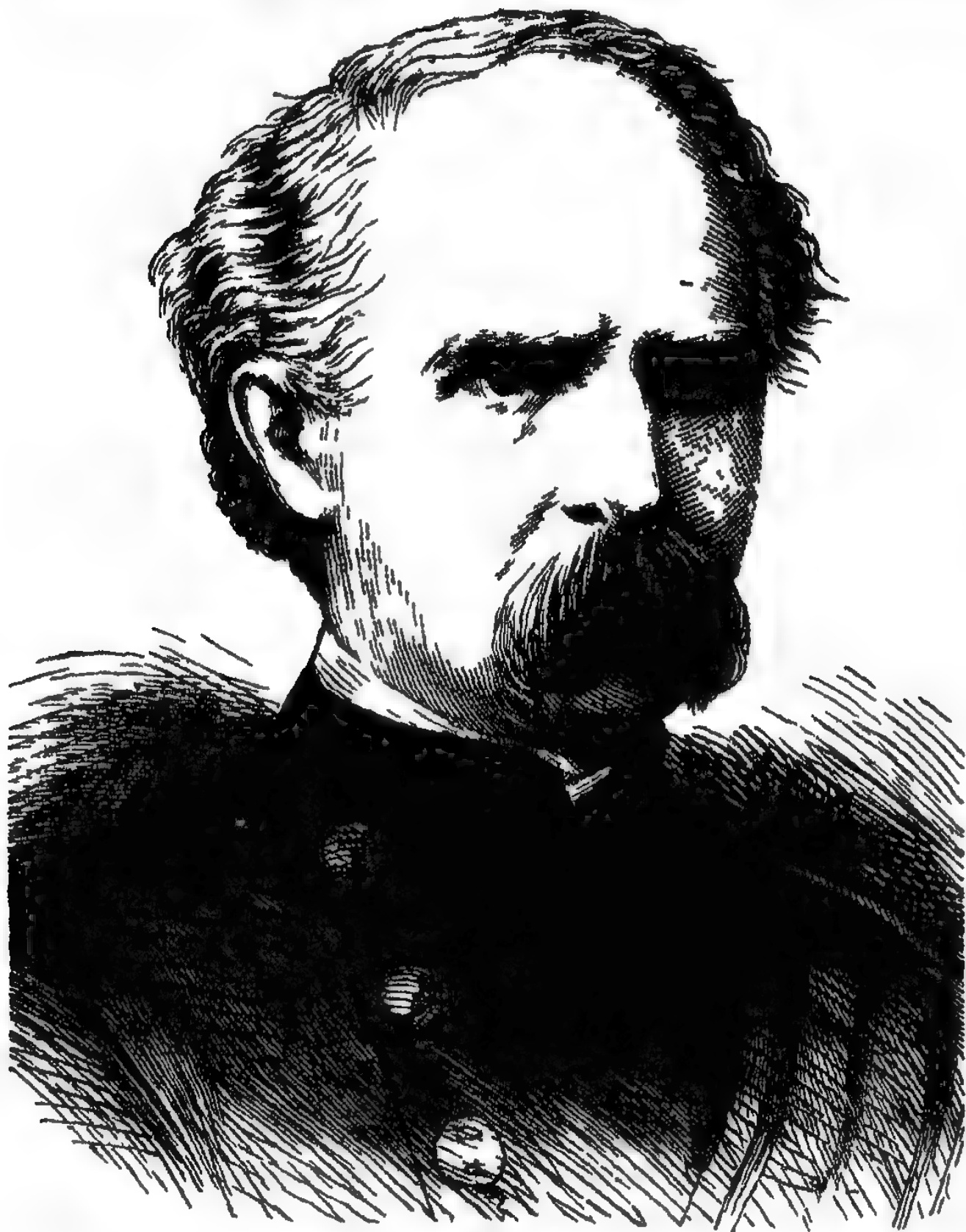
GENERAL STEWART'S MARCH FROM KANDAHAR TO KABUL,—  
HIS DEFEAT AND DISPERSION OF THE GHILZAIS AT  
AHMED KHEL—GENERAL ROSS MOVES INTO THE LOGAR  
VALLEY—AYOUB KHAN PUTS IN FORCE HIS SCHEMES—  
HE TAKES THE FIELD—IGNORANCE OF THE BRITISH  
POLITICAL OFFICERS OF HIS INTENTIONS OR MARCH—  
INADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET AYOUB — POLI-  
TICAL MISMANAGEMENT IN ENGLAND OF AFGHANISTAN  
AFFAIRS.



EVENTS justified the foregoing step so far as breaking up the Ghilzai power was concerned. Sir Donald Stewart marched from Kandahar on the 30th of March, 1880, and met the Ghilzais at Ahmed Khel, where, after a desperate battle, he defeated them with great slaughter, utterly broke up their organisation, and advanced to Ghazni, from which he found all the chiefs who had so persistently planned outrages, had fled. He then continued his march to Kabul, was met by the outcoming force from thence, and took command of the entire Kabul division as the senior officer. Sir Frederick Roberts and



General Ross then moved out into the Logar valley for the purpose of keeping quiet the country within the area of operations. This they succeeded in doing, and from that



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR DONALD STEWART, G.C.B.

time, few, if any, further attacks were made by the Ghilzais upon posts occupied by the British forces along the line.

Now, the two events happening almost simultaneously—namely, the starting from Kandahar of Sir Donald Stewart, who was justly feared by hostile inhabitants as an able general, and liked by the peaceful as a wise administrator ; and the advent of Abdhurrhan Khan towards Kabul, roused Ayoub at Herat to a great effort.

In Afghanistan itself he had many friends. His name stood well with a large party in the country who were inclined towards him as their future ruler. Adherents with conflicting opinions or aspirations gradually drew around him and became reconciled to the one object in view—that of placing him on the throne, or at least of seizing upon the Kandahar district, and from thence working further mischief. But from past events, either of these the British were justly determined to oppose. In Ayoub Khan as a ruler, there could be no confidence ; to the contrary, there would be, as there always had been from him, open or concealed hostility ; and, as a pensioner of Russia, a probable leaning to that power, which would quickly bring about a worse state of affairs than existed before the war, and thus cause everything to be sooner or later done over again at vast expense of money and great sacrifice of valuable life.

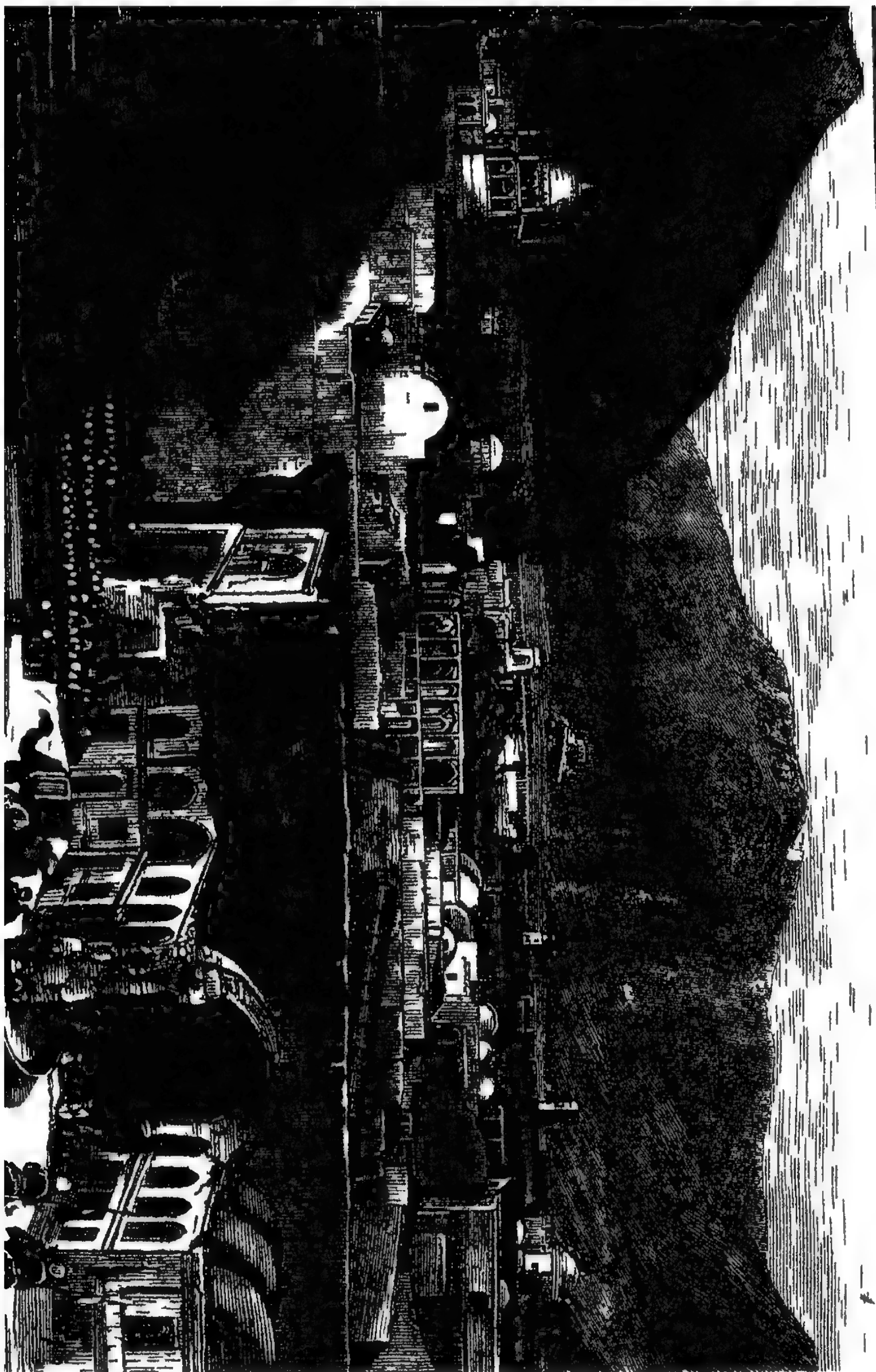
Ayoub Khan soon began to put in force the long-cherished ideas which he had possessed, for the invasion of the Kandahar province, and for the arousing of inhabitants of the Semidawhar district by which he would possess himself of the city of Kandahar, and then, by his enhanced power and reputation, endeavour to bring on a general rising against the British throughout the whole of Afghanistan, and thus force them to recognise him as the ruler of the country, or to fight him in furtherance of having as Emeer, one more friendly to British interests.

Rumours shortly began to be rife as to the fact of Ayoub Khan having taken the field with a well-equipped army, and

supported by several influential chiefs who had identified themselves with him, and with his enterprise for the overthrow of the British power, at least in Kandahar, if not in the whole of Afghanistan.

The intentions of Ayoub Khan—the direction of his march—the strength of his force—the nature of the country between Kandahar and Herat—the state of the roads, or whether indeed there was a road at all upon which troops of all arms could be moved ; even the exact distance between Kandahar and Herat ;—all were utterly unknown to the British authorities either in India or at home. A lamentable state of ignorance to exist for any country situated as England was towards Afghanistan at that time : for such a power as Great Britain—a state that was a disgrace to the country which allowed it ; a condition which proved itself by one of the most fearful episodes of bloodshed and disaster that England has ever known.

But this state of things was principally due to the effect of party politics in England. The seven years' term of the last Parliament had nearly expired, and the Liberal party had for some time past been making frantic onslaughts upon the policy of the Conservatives then in office, with the object of shaking the confidence of the country in them. Their general policy ; the war in Afghanistan, and other matters, had been persistently hunted down. A party cry had been raised in the most determined manner by the Liberals on every available opportunity, against the doings of the Conservatives towards Afghanistan ; further, every movement made by our troops was watched by these politicians with eagerness, in the hopes of catching the Conservatives tripping, and of thus gaining the occasion for a political onslaught. An incessant carping and questioning of the expenditure of money necessary for the war was carried on. In short, the Conservatives were hampered







by an everlasting hounding down of the war, and by a harrying about anything which appeared like an advance into, or a prolonged occupation of the country.

The war was unjust ; it was impolitic ; it was unnecessary : so said the Liberal party. The Conservatives said the opposite, and well justified the reasons upon which the war had been undertaken. Their countrymen, for the most part, felt satisfied with what they had done, and supported them in all their measures for the protection of the just interests of the country. But persistently did the Liberals attack their political adversaries upon every matter which related to the conduct of the Afghan war ; unfortunately, with considerable effect, for several arrangements which were in contemplation for the security of the British positions in Afghanistan were dropped, owing to the expense and other requisite considerations which they would involve, being certain to bring on fresh political onslaughts having for their object the weakening of the Conservative position. This unhappy hesitation caused improper conclusions to be formed by the opponents of the Government, and fierce war to be still made against it in the House of Parliament.

So, therefore, did these conflicting politicians rage at home, while our brave soldiers were doing their duty in the field to their Queen and country like men ; and were trying with all their intellect, with all their bodily strength, and with all their courage, to uphold the honour, the dignity, and the power of Great Britain in Afghanistan and India.

It is perfectly clear, and for many reasons, that Herat, or some strong position near that city, should have been long ago taken up, so that Ayoub Khan and his movements could be closely watched ; that reliable information as to the state of the roads towards Herat should have been gained ; that the nature of the country should have been ascertained, and the character and disposition of the



people inhabiting the intervening country inquired into. I say—and I say it with firmness—that all this should have been done during the eighteen months that the British occupied Kandahar.

From reliable information obtained from Afghanistan, it has been ascertained that it was inexplicable to the Afghans themselves that Herat, which lay at the mercy of the British for this period, should not have been taken possession of; and there is not a shadow of a doubt that instructions from England would have been given for at least a strong post of observation to be occupied well towards that city, but for the pertinacious attacks of the Liberal party at home, and which would have made this movement the occasion for an assertion that it tended to a permanent occupation of Afghanistan, and thus encourage Russia to assert that it was necessary to assail and occupy Merv as a counterpoise; and that it was involving the country in an unnecessary expense.

It is not requisite here to go into the considerations in detail which influenced the Conservative Government to relinquish the idea of a proper advance towards Herat, nor to go at length into the political pressure which was at work to induce this Government to come to the decision of making no step in the direction of that city. Suffice it to say, that the contemplated forward movement upon Herat as a necessary precaution was given up, and thus the whole country, from Kandahar to that place, was a sealed book to the military commanders in Afghanistan, and to all in India and this country. The result of this was continual trouble and ultimate disaster. No adequate effort had been made, even under such circumstances, to gain or employ reliable spies who would render at least some service. The fact of what spies we had, not having well served our political agent who accompanied the British force to Kandahar, is admitted

in the despatch which announced the ultimate disaster at Maiwand that followed upon the movement of a body



LIEUT. GENERAL SIR M. A. S. BIDDULPH, K.C.B., K.A.

*By Brown and Sheppard India,*

of British troops which became necessary by the force of the inevitable.



## CHAPTER XII.

AYOUB KHAN ADVANCES TOWARDS KANDAHAR—HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROAD—BRITISH IGNORANCE OF HIS PROGRESS—AYOUB'S NUMBERS SWELLED BY TRIBAL LEVIES IN HIS FAVOUR—THE WALI OF KANDAHAR SENT TO RESIST AYOUB—ALARMING RUMOURS AT KANDAHAR—DISAFFECTION OF THE WALI'S TROOPS—BRITISH FORCE SENT TO THE SUPPORT OF WALI—MUTINY AND DISPERSION OF HIS TROOPS.



It was amidst all these circumstances, that Ayoub Khan at last collected his force for the possession of the Kandahar province by a direct defeat of troops sent to oppose him; or, for turning past Kandahar and reaching Ghazni on the Kabul road, there establish himself in power, and rouse the country in his favour, or attack the British at Kabul, as matters might determine.

He advanced, and as he progressed nearer to Kandahar, his approach became known, and *he* showed the British what they should have already been aware of—that there

was a good and perfect road for the movement of all arms of the service the whole way from Herat to Kandahar. He showed the British, too, how he could move troops along this road (unknown to the British), and taught them such a lesson of neglect and supineness as it is hoped this country will for ever remember. The lesson, indeed, of shameful neglect of proper precaution for the preservation of valuable lives which this man taught England and the English, is written in letters of blood upon the long roll of death which was published to the nation in the *London Gazette* of the 19th Nov., 1880, as a ghastly record of British (it must be admitted) well-merited disgrace; for from first to last—from the original neglect of the most ordinary of precautionary measures which arose out of political ill-judgment, to the crowning act of moving out of a good defensive position to attack an enemy of *absolutely unknown* strength, either in guns, horsemen, or footmen—the whole of those acts which led to the terrible disaster at Maiwand can only be described as resulting from a continued political and military oversight.

When will England learn well the lessons taught for her future guidance? When will England avoid military disasters which cause her to bow down her head in shame before other nations of the earth? When will she learn how to save the fearful sacrifice of some of the best blood in her Empire? Never, while political party power, and the warfare for political place stand as selfish interests before all the rest of those of this country. Never, while the money-getting proclivities of many of the nation are so rampant; and what is necessary to keep England's power and place before the world is grudged by false economists as taking something from their well-hoarded store of wealth.

Business, and the occupation of money-getting, seem to

teach a great country like England to look at and read with indifference, an enormous list of killed and wounded men in its official gazette ; teaches it to view with comparative apathy, the awful record of a national disaster brought about by political wrong-doing ; and not only this, but to forget it all as quickly as possible—to go on its way in the occupation which absorbs its whole being, and to learn no lesson whatever from so fearful a catastrophe, for the future guidance of its sons.

Ayoub Khan advanced, and gathered strength as he did so. The latter was still unknown to those whose business it was to have made themselves acquainted with his progress.

The whole of Afghanistan between Kandahar and Herat now became highly excited. A blow was to be struck at the British—that was enough for the unfriendly tribes which infested the district through which Ayoub came. Various were the objects with which many of these tribes joined him ; the principal being that of the almost certain plunder of Kandahar. This of itself, without any other, was quite sufficient to swell Ayoub's numbers as he came forward ; and there is no doubt he gave out that this was a complete certainty. He approached nearer, and yet nearer to the precincts of the city with continually-increasing force. Of all about him or his numbers, or even his movements, the British remained in ignorance until the fatal moment when a small but brave body of troops saw themselves suddenly confronted by a countless multitude of well-armed and well-equipped enemies, many of whom were fanatics sworn to die in the cause which they espoused.

Then all was seen and known when too late !—when there was nothing left but death rather than dishonour, for the valiant men who for the first time became aware of the strength against which they had been brought to combat.

So utterly ignorant were the Indian authorities as to the



numbers or organisation of Ayoub Khan's forces, that in the first instance they gave the task of defeating this chieftain to an influential and friendly personage, by name Wali Sher Ali, who was known as the Wali of Kandahar. This man, the British Government had created into a sort of governing prince of the province, and had given him arms, ammunition, and a battery of guns to support his authority and position. He had managed to get together a force of about 2,700 men, arm them with the British weapons which had been given to him, and had taken the field some time previously, with the ostensible purpose of keeping the district around Kandahar quiet. He succeeded in this to a doubtful extent, for his troops were of an unstable quality, as events quickly proved.

This Wali seemed to have conceived the idea that he alone was quite able to cope with any force which Ayoub Khan could bring against him. His self-conceit was augmented by a military review given in his honour, and by the investiture at Kandahar of his new authority with much ceremony.

In consequence of the alarming rumours which daily grew in strength, that Ayoub had encamped outside Herat with the intention of assembling his forces to make a determined attempt to get possession of Kandahar, the Wali, about the end of May, 1880, left that city and advanced to Ghiriskh, close to the Helmund, about seventy miles from Kandahar. He even crossed the Helmund, and went some short distance beyond its banks; yet he appears never to have obtained any information concerning Ayoub Khan or his army, other than that he was coming forward from point to point towards the Wali's own force. Then this Wali began to get uneasy, and retreated to the right bank of the Helmund. This was enough for the description of men which formed the force



he commanded. Emissaries of Ayoub were amongst them, and they began to show signs of disaffection. Ultimately, these troops, which were to completely check the invader and turn him back, openly mutinied in the face of the British who came to support them.

It would certainly seem, that from two causes it was found necessary to support this Wali with a British force. These reasons were: firstly, that the inhabitants of Kandahar were now in a state of the wildest alarm at the prospect of rapine and murder in their midst; for there were large numbers of dangerous vagabonds in and around the city itself, who were only waiting for a favourable opportunity to break out into open hostility and commence plundering in every direction. It was therefore necessary to reassure the citizens by a display of force towards Ayoub, as they were already flying from the city for safety. Secondly, owing to the doubts about the stability of the Wali's force; as, if these deserted or dispersed at sight of the enemy, there would be nothing to stop Ayoub's progress up to the very gates of the city.

Thus, it was determined to send from Kandahar all the troops which were not actually necessary for garrisoning the citadel and certain other defensive points of the city itself. This force was placed under the command of Brigadier-General Burrows, with Colonel St. John as political agent, and with Brigadier-General Nuttall in command of the cavalry.

On the 5th of July news reached Kandahar that Ayoub Khan had started upon his expedition, and had already reached Farrah, some 230 miles from Kandahar, a week before that day; but even then, nothing was known of his strength. Then the brigade under General Burrows moved out of Kandahar to support the Wali. The British force reached Ghiriskh, near the left bank of the Helmund, about

seventy miles from Kandahar, on the 14th of July, and encamped near the town.

The Wali was a little in advance of the opposite bank of the river towards Herat, and so soon as the British General took up his position at Ghiriskh, ordered his force to retire also to the left bank, to be close to the force which had been sent to support him. Suddenly the whole of the Wali's footmen mutinied and carried off the guns, which were only recaptured after a chase and rough charge by some of the British troops near. The Wali was left with only a small body of cavalry which had remained faithful, and went into the British camp, incompetent to take any further action.

This sudden mutiny was an extremely suspicious circumstance. Certainly it looked as if the troops of the Wali desired to remain where they were ; meet Ayoub, and go over to him in a body, taking with them the six guns, and thus place General Burrows' force in a most critical position.

By this defection, the whole situation became changed. The ranks of Ayoub Khan received an accession of numbers to the extent of at least two thousand men, all well armed. He also received from them reliable information about the strength of the British force which opposed him ; while this still remained unaware of that of the Herat chief, or even of the direction of his march.

Whilst the British remained in this state of unfortunate ignorance, the dispersed men of the Wali's army, in their progress to join Ayoub, roused the whole district around to a high pitch of excitement in his favour, as they passed from village to village.



## CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL BURROWS RETIRES FROM THE HELMUND TO KHUSKH-I-NAKHUD AND THERE ENTRENCHES HIMSELF—GENERAL BURROWS LEAVES HIS ENTRENCHMENTS AT KHUSKH-I-NAKHUD TO ATTACK AYOUB—DEFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND INFORMATION OF THE BRITISH COMMANDERS.



EXTREME caution was now necessary. This seems to have been seen by the head-quarter authorities at Simla ; as a telegram was despatched to General Primrose in command at Kandahar dated the 15th of July, in which were these words : "General Burrows must act according to his judgment, reporting fully ; he must act with caution on account of distance of support."

Up to a certain point, the latter part of this order General Burrows carried out ; for, owing to the fact that the Helmund was now fordable at many points, Ayoub could cross it with guns, cavalry, and infantry with ease upon either of the General's flanks, work round to his rear, and either get upon his lines of retreat, or gain the road to Ghazni.

General Burrows, therefore, wisely retired from the banks

of the Helmund, and took up a strong strategical position at Khuskh-i-Nakhud, about forty miles from Kandahar, and upon which several roads from Herat converged. Here he parked his stores, baggage, and matériel, fortified the post, and awaited the course of events.

From this moment nothing is, or perhaps ever will be, known as to what he did to ascertain the strength of the advancing enemy ; whether, in short, he sent out strong cavalry patrols or reconnaissances many miles beyond his camp, or neglected to do so. The inference is, that he did not take effectual steps in this direction ; as, by the despatch of the Adjutant-General in India to the Secretary of the Government of India, Military Department, dated 25th of September, 1880, General Greaves says, after commenting upon the meagre statements of the sad events which followed, that "Brigadier-General Burrows has not informed us what military measures he took for ascertaining the strength and disposition of Ayoub's army after it had crossed the Helmund."

It would appear, however, that an overweening confidence in himself and the small force under his command, had taken possession of him ; an under-estimating of the enemy's power seems to have taken hold on him (a fault with many British Generals) ; for, in a telegram from General Primrose to the Quartermaster-General at Simla, dated 21st July, 1880, he makes the following vague and unsatisfactory remarks : "Situation remains unchanged ; travellers who have passed Ayoub's camp say things are not going on smoothly there, and that in all probability there will be a split before they reach the Helmund ; General Burrows *ready for them*. Troops healthy and in excellent spirits."

Ayoub Khan was well informed of the movements of the British force, of their strength, and of the exact position

which General Burrows had taken up; and resolved accordingly.

Now, it is certainly clear, that while this Prince was well informed of every matter connected with the British troops; all the telegrams which were sent from head-quarters at Simla to General Primrose at Kandahar, and from thence to General Burrows, were based upon the assumption that the army of Ayoub was of such a strength as to be easily coped with and defeated by the comparatively small body of troops under General Burrows. It is perfectly inconceivable that positive telegrams and instructions such as were sent on to that unfortunate Brigadier could have been despatched, if the authorities had been at all aware of the enormous preponderance which existed on the side of the Afghan army over that of the British, both in guns, cavalry, and regular infantry, to say nothing of the large number of fanatical Ghazis who joined the ranks of the Prince's force as he marched onward.

The British force under General Burrows consisted of 12 guns with 190 men, 575 cavalry, and 1,835 infantry—total in men all told, about 2,600, with which were camp and baggage attendants, numbering nearly 4,000. That of Ayoub Khan was 30 guns, about 4,000 cavalry, and 18,000 infantry and Ghazis, independent of camp-followers; the whole of the fighting men in excellent equipment, and up to this point animated by one spirit, notwithstanding all reports to the contrary.

General Burrows' instructions were to cover Kandahar, and to prevent Ayoub from slipping past him to Ghazni, laying between Kandahar and Kabul, and establishing himself there for future movements against the British in and around Kabul.

This double task was too heavy for so small a force as General Burrows possessed. But in view of these instruc-



tions, it would seem that it had been deemed imperative a blow ought to be struck at Ayoub, should he attempt either a direct movement upon Kandahar, or a turning-off on the road to Ghazni.

It is, however, impossible to consider that General Burrows could have been *peremptorily* ordered to attack Ayoub's army, by moving out from a well-secured position against such a force as that which was advancing towards him ; nor does it seem by the published telegrams that he was directed to do so. These telegrams were sent in utter ignorance of the real state of Ayoub's force, and were founded upon the meagre information as to its progress and disposition which reached Kandahar.

General Burrows' orders were therefore *conditional*, and could be nothing more. A blow to be struck at Ayoub, could surely never mean that the Brigadier was to attack the Afghan Prince in the open, with the complete certainty of being utterly overwhelmed and destroyed. An order of this kind must have been ; that the British force was to be so manœuvred by its commander, as to be placed in an advantageous position directly in Ayoub's path, or on the flanks of his line of march, and in such a secure manner as to bring on an attack. Then the British, in a defensive position, could, without doubt, notwithstanding the difference in numbers, have repulsed the attack and followed up in a pursuit which would have utterly demoralized the Afghan chief's entire army, and caused many of his adherents to fall away from him, and he himself to retreat as rapidly as possible to Herat. It is well known that an Afghan force, however strong, cannot stand a repulse, and if this be made good by a vigorous pursuit, all cohesion is at an end, and a general dispersion is the inevitable result. Or, as General Sir Frederick Haines appears to have stated, that "had General Burrows been aware that Ayoub could possibly



have presented himself at Maiwand in such force as that ascribed to him, General Burrows would have considered himself hardly strong enough to attack him, but would have contented himself with retiring towards his base at Kandahar, keeping a close touch on the enemy with his cavalry, and would certainly have taken steps to rid himself of the enormous amount of stores and baggage with which he was encumbered on the day of the action."

But neither of these courses was followed, through the fatal and original want of knowledge in all that concerned Ayoub Khan, his movements, or his army, which prevailed from the Helmund to the India Office in Parliament Street, London.

On the 21st of July, General Primrose, at Kandahar, received information from General Burrows "that he had been informed that Ayoub had, with his regulars, reached the Helmund on the 20th, and that his intention was stated to be ; to move on Sungboor, twelve miles from General Burrows at Khuskh-i-Nakhud, and then attack the General ;" and on the 23rd, a report, received by General Primrose from Colonel St. John, the political agent accompanying the British force, stated "that Ayoub had crossed the Helmund at Haiderabad," and with further information, that "it was expected that five thousand horsemen would arrive next day at Sungboor, beyond that river, and the main body the following day." Then on the 24th, General Primrose, telegraphing to the Adjutant-General in India, states "that a cavalry patrol, proceeding in the direction of Sungboor, twelve miles from the camp at Khuskh-i-Nakhud, came upon the enemy's advanced parties, and that a cavalry reconnaissance made in the same direction had engaged with a party of the enemy's cavalry, had defeated them, and had pursued them for six miles.

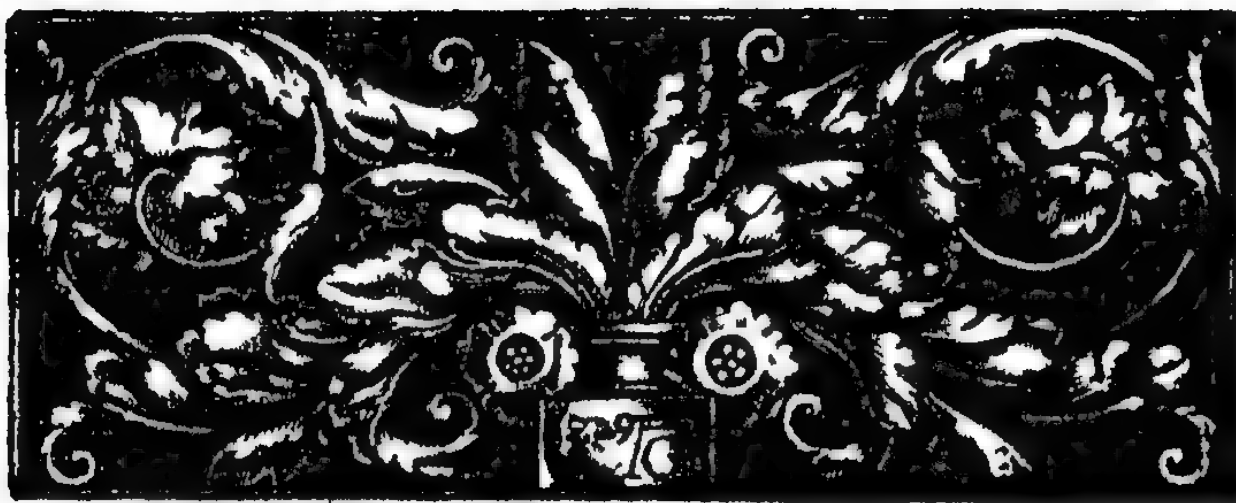
From the published despatches it would appear that, not-

withstanding the known proximity of Ayoub's army to the British camp, nothing was done to seriously feel for it in the direction from which it seemed to be advancing ; nor does there appear to have been any reconnaissance in force for the purpose of making him show his strength, and thus determine whether it was proper or safe to seriously attack him in the open while on the march, or otherwise.

The 26th of July arrived, and on that day General Burrows received information that Ayoub was in march on Maiwand, a village to the right front of the position at Khuskh-i-Nakhud, which appeared to indicate that it was his intention to avoid an attack upon the position at the latter place, and to pass by it and gain the road to Ghazni through Arghandab valley.

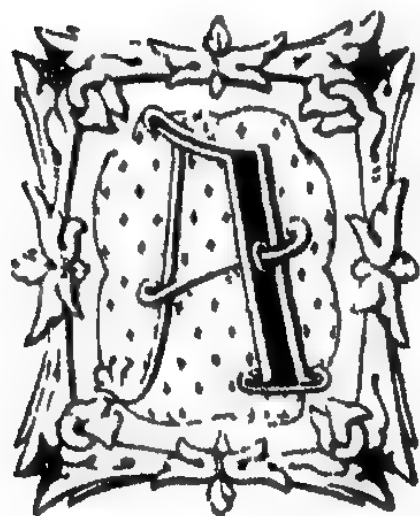
From what is at present known, it does not seem that General Burrows, by the aid of cavalry patrols or reconnaissances, made any serious endeavour to ascertain whether the information he had received was reliable. From certain statements made in a despatch from the Adjutant-General in India, it would appear that the information as to the direction of the movement in progress by Ayoub, was to a certain extent incorrect, but General Burrows seems to have placed implicit confidence in it ; for, on the morning of the 27th of July, he broke up his camp at Khuskh i-Nakhud and moved out of the strong position he had there taken up, to intercept the army of *unknown strength* possessed by Ayoub Khan.





## CHAPTER XIV.

THE BATTLE OF MAIWAND — TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER AND DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH FORCE—SERGEANT MULLANE OF THE ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY — GUNNER JAMES COLLINS OF THE SAME REGIMENT — CAPTURE OF LIEUTENANT MACLAINE—GALLANT CONDUCT AND DEATH OF MAJOR BLACKWOOD—LIEUTENANT OSBORNE—LAST STAND OF THE 55TH—DEATH OF COLONEL GALBRAITH AND OTHER OFFICERS—CONSTERNATION AT KANDAHAR —PUBLIC DISTRESS IN ENGLAND.



As the bugles rang out the "assemble," on the bright morning of the 27th of July, 1880, every man of the little British army fell into his place in company, troop, or battery. Tents were struck, camels were loaded, bullocks were harnessed to baggage carts, horses were placed in the gun shafts, packing was completed, and all was prepared for a final start.

As each man took his station, it was evident that he was well aware there was a day of serious work before him.

In the rear of the troops, which were formed up in their order of march, was an enormous mass of impedimenta of

war, accompanied by the chattering and excited crowd of attendants which usually accompanies an Indian army in its progress. The baggage guards and their officers were endeavouring to get the almost inextricable body of camels, horses, and bullocks into order ; while the fighting men were being arranged according to the directions which had been issued the previous day.

Aides-de-camp and orderlies galloped from point to point with final instructions. At last all was ready.

As the columns stood waiting for the order to step off, it was strange to witness the contrast between the expressions upon the faces of those present. Many English soldiers were there. To look at these men, one would have noticed, amidst the silence which reigned in their ranks, as they stood with ordered arms, a calmness—nay, almost a coldness of demeanour. So quiet was the play of their features and the expression of their eyes, that no one would have imagined that these men were going forth to fight fiercely for their country, and to face wounds or death in every shape upon the field of battle. Their arms were in excellent condition ; their accoutrements were clean ; their uniforms almost without a stain. They appeared as if about to proceed to a morning drill. Yet a close observer might have noticed a more than ordinary serious look upon these men's countenances—a set, hard expression, as if every man felt convinced that there was something to be done that day of a very important nature—something, indeed, which would require the stern determination and the stubborn courage of Englishmen. A hard fight against implacable enemies was expected, and no man knew if he would ever see the sun rise again.

The greater portion of the troops was composed of native soldiers. Disciplined in the English style, these men, as they stood, were, like their British brethren in

arms, silent ; yet the native character showed itself in the restless eye—in the look of that fierce excitement so difficult of control and often so soon bringing on the reaction of fear in the midst of danger. Their dark eyes flashed ; they grasped their arms tightly ; their swarthy features worked with strong, yet suppressed emotion. The English officers who commanded them were cool and collected, as if on ordinary parade.

A little after half-past six a.m. an Aide-de-camp galloped up to the Brigadier in command of the cavalry, and communicated to him the order to march. This officer's disposition for the advance guard was, one troop of the 3rd Native Light Cavalry to head the whole march. In rear of this, at about half a mile distance, followed the remainder of the regiment, with four guns of E Battery Royal Horse Artillery. Then, as the main body, came native infantry ; the battery of smooth-bore Artillery recovered from the Wali's mutineers ; the 66th Regiment, with the remainder of the native troops and two guns of E Battery Royal Horse Artillery ; followed by a rear-guard consisting of ninety-six sabres of Sind Horse, under Colonel Malcolmson. The baggage and stores marched on the right flank of the troops, protected by its guards and by a party of native cavalry, under Lieutenant Smith.

The march slowly progressed, without any contact with an enemy or even sighting one, until about ten o'clock a.m., when, at a distance of eight miles from the position just vacated at Khuskh-i-Nakhud, the advanced guard perceived some cavalry in the act of crossing the British line of march diagonally, and inclining towards the village of Maiwand.

The British moved steadily on. The enemy's cavalry, on a nearer approach of General Burrows' force, drew in a northerly direction, as if towards the Gurmar valley, and threw out advanced parties, who stood fast and



watched the progress of the British column. Soon after this, large masses of the enemy could be perceived in march across the front, in the same direction as the cavalry first seen.

It now became evident to General Burrows that Ayoub Khan's whole army was before him, and that it was a large one. He still determined to advance, and observing a village slightly to his left front, he directed that it should be forced and taken, if in possession of hostile people ; if not, then to be occupied and held for the purpose of placing there the baggage, while he proceeded beyond to give the enemy battle.

The advanced guard of the troop of the 3rd Light Cavalry under Lieutenant Geoghegan, with two of the guns of the Horse Artillery under Major Blackwood, were directed to clear the village of enemies. The guns went forward, but the place was found deserted. Then the enormous baggage train was hurried forward, and placed in and about the village ; while General Burrows pressed on the remainder of his force, and formed his order of battle upon some rising ground to the right front beyond.

Lieutenant Geoghegan, with his troop, was ordered to stand fast at the village. In the meantime, Major Blackwood moved to the edge of a rather broad and difficult nullah that ran in front of the village. Here Brigadier-General Nuttall, commanding the advance, stopped for some minutes to reconnoitre the position of the enemy, when he perceived that Lieutenant Maclaine, with the remaining two guns of the Horse Artillery attached to the advanced guard, had crossed the nullah to the Brigadier's left with a troop of the 3rd Sind Horse, and was rapidly advancing towards the enemy.

The Brigadier sent off mounted orderlies at once, with directions to Lieutenant Maclaine for his immediate recall ;



but, before the orderlies reached the young officer, he had unlimbered and opened fire. Seeing this, General Nuttall instantly crossed the nullah with the other two guns of the Horse Artillery, and with the remainder of the 3rd Light Cavalry, moved rapidly to the front in support, and there found the whole of Ayoub's army in the act of forming its order of battle; its front extending over some miles in length. He perceived that Ayoub's cavalry, infantry, and the fanatical Ghazis with him, appeared in countless numbers.

The enemy was deploying his troops into line from his order of march with great steadiness and precision; and it was only too evident now, that a determined attack by the Afghans upon the British force was imminent; also that in a short time the whole of Ayoub's large army would soon be down upon the little British force which was just then forming up on the rising ground beyond the village. to open the battle.

All considerations connected with adequate measures not having been taken to ascertain beforehand even an approximate idea of the strength of the Afghan force were at an end. Here it was, face to face with the British who had been sent out to bar its progress. In one moment all political or military neglect was made manifest. All want of money or men which a wrong-headed policy of weakness had caused, and which military incapacity had unfortunately supported, was only too awfully apparent!

The opposing forces, which could be likened to two fiery serpents trailing their long length along the war-path, were about to encircle each other in folds of death! Nothing now remained for the victims of so much shortsightedness and wrong-doing, but to be slaughtered wholesale by the long lines of well-armed men by whom they were already surrounded, without a hope of escape.

The army which was advancing with rapid strides to sweep off the face of the earth the men who had been brought thus to this spot, numbered over 20,000 men, of which 4,000 were cavalry, with 30 guns. As has been already stated, the British numbered about 2,600 men all told, of which 576 were cavalry with 12 guns; the infantry numbered 1,835.

The sight which the British force now witnessed was enough to appal the stoutest heart, and unnerve the strongest.

Already, before the Afghans fired a shot, both the British flanks were enveloped by cavalry and infantry which extended far, very far beyond either extremity of the British line; and who could, by a simple sweep round, get into the rear, and surround combatants, baggage, and stores.

It is possible that a number of the native troops engaged on the British side, were not aware of the enormous odds against them at first; for they obeyed their orders to deploy, and for some time remained steady; but as soon as they perceived the countless array which so resolutely advanced to kill them, these native troops showed signs of unreliability. Not so the well-trained British soldier—the soldier of battle. No man blenched who was of British blood. As English soldiers, they were prepared to do as others of their worthy profession had done before—die fighting, with their faces to their country's enemies.

The ground upon which this terrible battle was waged was a level plain, slightly undulating on the Afghan side, but open and indefensible on that of the British. No cover of any sort was afforded to either cavalry, guns, or infantry. All were in the open, and entirely exposed to the attack of the approaching host.

On came the Afghans, and, as they did so, they developed an excellent order of battle. Cavalry was on both flanks.

The guns were well advanced. The regular infantry were in good formation, and supporting a large number of Ghazis who had stationed themselves in front ready for a tremendous rush as soon as they came near enough to charge.

In order to give the main body of the British under General Burrows time to complete its order of formation, Brigadier-General Nuttall went forward with the second two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery belonging to the advanced guard, and sent to the rear for the remaining two which formed the E battery of six guns of that gallant corps which was attached to the force. At the same time, seeing that Lieutenant Maclaine was too isolated, the Brigadier sent orders for his retirement towards the main body. With an endeavour to check the steady advance of the ever-increasing numbers which were pressing towards the front, General Nuttall again sent forward the guns a short distance; when they unlimbered, opened fire, and waited for the advance of the British infantry into position.

For upwards of half an hour, the enemy took no notice of the fire of the two guns of the Horse Artillery which had been sent to the right flank; or of that of the two on the left of the remaining eight which were brought up into the line of artillery, the Afghans being occupied in getting their cannon into position for replying with disastrous effect. This they soon accomplished, and the thunder of thirty guns shook the air as their loud reports boomed out in response to the twelve on the British side.

But just previous to the Afghan guns opening fire, the British force of infantry had been deployed, and had taken up its position for the fight. It had scarcely done so, before the Afghan cannon opened upon them from advantageous positions with destructive effect. So well sustained, and so telling was their fire, that, owing to the non-possession of

the slightest cover, it was found necessary to order the infantry to lie down, as the only means of safety from complete annihilation by the Afghan cannonade. A wing of Jacob's Rifles (a native corps) which was in rear acting as support, was soon ordered up to the flanks of the line of infantry, as the Ghazis and the Afghan cavalry were already beginning to threaten both ends and even the rear of the British line of battle.

*Three hours* were thus spent under fire of the Afghan cannon! The shot from the enemy's guns and from the carbines of a mass of cavalry who fired at a distance, tore amongst the British guns and infantry, and cut up the ground in every direction around them. This alone was enough to shake the steadiness of the best troops in the world, much less that of native soldiers whose method of warfare lay in attack, not in passive slaughter. But it would seem that no other alternative existed, as any advance into the open, or positive exposure of the small force opposed to them, would have probably at once caused a general rush of the whole Afghan army, and immediate destruction.

And this was what actually followed, so soon as the Afghan attack was fully developed, and every man, horse, and gun were in position to rapidly advance and strike down all before them.

As it was owing to the perfect arrangements made by General Nuttall with the small force of cavalry at his command; and to the excellent way in which this force acted during the morning, that an earlier defeat did not take place; it is proper that their doings on this eventful day shall first be recorded.

Throughout the entire morning, and up to the time the infantry and guns were driven back, the cavalry had been undergoing a terrible ordeal. Only 460 sabres were

engaged out of 570 attached to the British force, the remainder being detached in various duties connected with baggage guard and orderly work. These were disposed as follows : 130 of the 3rd Light Cavalry, under Major Currie, on the right, with two guns of Horse Artillery. On the extreme left was a troop of Sind Horse, with the two guns under Lieutenant Maclaine ; and somewhat in rear, echeloned outside these guns, was a troop of the 3rd Light Cavalry, under Lieutenant Reid, which was there placed to watch a large body of the enemy's cavalry that had, as soon as the battle commenced, formed up opposite the left flank, with the evident intention of turning this and sweeping down upon the baggage and stores.

The remainder of the cavalry under Colonel Malcolmson and Lieutenant Geoghehan, consisting of ninety-six sabres of the 3rd Sind Horse and fifty sabres 3rd Light Cavalry, were guarding the ground to the baggage park and the rear.

As with the infantry in respect to the nature and configuration of the ground, so with the cavalry. The battle field, as stated, being a dead level plain, afforded no shelter or cover for either ; therefore, so soon as the enemy's guns opened, the cavalry became an excellent mark for their fire. No sooner had their artillery practice commenced, than the masses of cavalry on the British left flank increased in numbers. Brigadier Nuttall, observing this, sent all his available cavalry to that flank to check an onslaught. The Afghan cavalry did not close for a charge, until their infantry were well enough up, to make this general along their own line from left to right ; but contented themselves by firing at a distance while their infantry were forming for attack. This was frequently replied to on the British side by parties of dismounted men.

While this was going on, the whole of the British cavalry on both flanks were opposed to a constant raking fire from



many of the enemy's guns ; and at times it seemed as if the whole thirty guns were being concentrated on the cavalry alone !

For three hours was the cavalry thus exposed, and it must certainly be admitted that the men bore the fearful ordeal right well. Many a better class of soldier than the natives who composed the British cavalry would have become unsteady, if not utterly demoralized, before such fire ; but General Nuttall moved them from point to point to avoid the enemy's aim, and frequently opened them out from their troop formation, thus lessening their losses.

In his report, General Nuttall bears testimony to the conduct of these men under the exceptional circumstances of a passive resistance so prolonged. Many, however, were killed and wounded. Their courage at last became severely tried, and their confidence was shaken.

Notwithstanding the excellent arrangements of Brigadier-General Nuttall to prevent the enemy from penetrating past the flanks, especially that of the left ; firing in the rear soon told him that parties of the enemy had got round there, and were amongst the baggage and stores. The camp attendants were quickly streaming away in excited retreat, leaving camels, bullocks, and everything else to their fate, and creating immediate confusion.

It becomes now necessary to relate what took place in the front of the line of battle. All can be but too shortly told.

A little before two o'clock, a battery of the enemy established itself on the right flank in a good position, and for some minutes poured a raking fire across the line and towards the rear. It was then clearly evident that the overwhelming numbers of the Afghans began to tell with tremendous effect.

The enemy's whole force was now up in order of battle,



and ready for the final attack. Their guns slackened fire. Their cavalry made for the flanks and rear. The Ghazis, supported by long lines of regular infantry, now rushed forward, and with terrible cries came down first upon the two guns of the Horse Artillery under Lieutenant Maclaine which were in advance on the left ; received their point blank fire, cut down the gunners, and captured the guns.

The men of Jacob's Rifles who had been sent to this flank had given cause of much uneasiness, and they had somewhat early in the day shown signs of unsteadiness. At this critical moment these men gave way. The Ghazis, with war cries, rushed past the guns and upon the whole line of infantry. The left flank was thus left exposed by the sudden retreat of Jacob's Rifles. Instantly the enormous swarm of Ghazis dashed upon the flank and rear, and endeavoured to roll up the whole line of infantry from one end to the other, cutting right and left.

Assailed with awful fury in front ; attacked on flank and rear, the entire body of native infantry now gave way, leaving the 66th English Regiment completely surrounded by an infuriated mob of fanatics, with the regular Afghan infantry in steady and well-ordered march in support. The Ghazis plied musket, pistol, and sword with deadly effect, and by sheer overwhelming numbers the gallant 66th was forced back fighting splendidly. They turned at every step, and used the bayonet with terrible determination, yet to no purpose, for the entire regiment was split up into isolated parties by incessant rushes, and driven struggling to the rear amongst flying native soldiers and murderous Ghazis.

The battle, if battle it can be called, was now over. There was nothing but a retreating crowd of disorderly fugitives being pressed rapidly back and struck to the earth at every step.

Shortly after two o'clock, General Nuttall perceived from his position on the extreme left, that the enemy was in the act of delivering his attack, and that the masses of Ghazis and lines of infantry were rushing forward; also that bodies of cavalry on the left flank were moving rapidly round it. Quickly he saw the effect of all this, and of the Afghan fire, for he soon observed the entire infantry force of the British retreating in the utmost disorder across the plain, swiftly followed by the entire Afghan army. He galloped up in succession to what remained of his own cavalry, and ordered them to form line in one united body, and charge down upon the advancing Afghans, with the endeavour to stem the living torrent of pursuers. But the men, already shaken, saw that their retreat was on the point of being cut off, and themselves surrounded. Portions only of the 3rd Sind Horse and 3rd Light Cavalry could be got together. These formed up. They charged; but the men bore away to the right before contact, and left their officers to deliver the charge home.

There was nothing left now but an endeavour to save the guns. Four of these, belonging to the Royal Horse Artillery, were the first reached by General Nuttall; the two most advanced under Lieutenant Maclaine having been, as already related, captured in an instant. The Brigadier then, with the exertions of some of his staff officers, got together some of the retiring stragglers (the remainder of his cavalry having got completely out of hand); these the General formed up in support of the four guns of the Horse Artillery and the six smooth-bore guns which had formerly been given to the Wali, then in the act of being conducted to the rear.

The four Horse Artillery guns and the small body of cavalry turned and faced the enemy. Several times Captain Slade unlimbered and opened fire, and upon checking the

torrent of pursuers, again limbered up and retired. Captain Slade's cool courage now was the admiration of all who beheld it. His example was followed by the excellent soldiers of a splendid corps ; for they stood to their guns firmly, and as if at ordinary drill on Woolwich Common. Their determined aspect cowed the ever-increasing enemies who followed with fierce footsteps. These stood aloof, and feared to face the deadly case shot with which the British gunners swept the ground. Yet the enemy's cannon once more got the range, and opened fire upon the four guns, which finally limbered up and slowly followed the retreating masses, and were covered by General Nuttall with the small force of cavalry which still remained to him.

For three miles did the British stream back, the 66th in parties fighting at every step, and still keeping some sort of order wherever there was an officer to direct them ; but the officers one by one were quickly killed or wounded, or got separated from their own men, and in the *melée* were mixed up with other corps. The enemy pursued rapidly, shooting and sabring as they advanced. The retreat soon became a general rout, and amongst the native soldiers *sauve qui peut*. All over the first few miles of ground, single combats or isolated battles by British soldiers against surrounding masses of the enemy could be seen in every direction, as they were pressed backwards.

But the acts of those who gained the Victoria Cross on this unfortunate occasion must necessarily be mentioned here.

A volume might be filled with a relation of the deeds of heroism which were observed by the combatants. Many of such deeds were seen only by the victors, as those who performed them were slain while in the act of their achievement.

Attached to the four guns which kept the enemy at bay

as they retired, was a sergeant named Patrick Mullane. This brave soldier saw one of the drivers attached to his gun struck from his horse while in the act of limbering up. He noticed that the man yet lived as he lay on the ground. "Badly wounded," thought he, "but they shall not hack him to pieces." The enemy were within a few yards only, yet the gallant sergeant ran back in face of them, and with strong arms lifted up the wounded driver and placed him upon the gun limber, mounted the wounded man's horse, and helped to bring the gun out of action.

A second time did Sergeant Mullane distinguish himself—this in the retreat to Kandahar.

Many in this retreat were wounded even when after the first few miles the pursuit had slackened. Parties of the enemy still hovered about, cutting off stragglers and destroying all who could not well defend themselves; in addition to which, the inhabitants of the villages through which the weary soldiers made their way to Kandahar, turned out and murdered all they could.

Parched with fearful thirst, the wounded died in numbers as they went along. At one particular village, a large number of soldiers lost their lives in efforts to obtain water with which to moisten their lips. Louder and louder became the cries for water of the helplessly wounded men; when Sergeant Mullane volunteered to go alone into this very village to procure that which would alleviate his comrades' sufferings. He accomplished his task at the risk of his life, for he was fired at repeatedly; yet he succeeded, and earned the grateful thanks of his distressed brother soldiers.

Again—Gunner James Collins earned the Victoria Cross for an act of self-sacrificing courage beyond all praise.

He toiled along on foot by the side of his gun, as his place on the limber was filled, as were other gunners', with

wounded men. The gun limber with its horses found themselves stopped in a certain part of the road by parties of the enemy, with whom were some armed villagers, and who at once commenced a cross fire upon the party. The bullets began to rattle about the limber boxes, when James Collins instantly rushed towards the enemy, with the object of drawing all their fire upon himself and away from the wounded men. He succeeded in doing so ; for the enemy aimed their shots upon him for several minutes, thus enabling the limber with the wounded men upon it, to get forward and out of fire. Strange it was, yet the life of Collins was preserved. Though the bullets of his enemies hurtled around him in every direction, he remained unhurt, and managed to once more reach his gun.

Poor Lieutenant Maclaine, whom General Burrows blamed in his meagre dispatch for opening fire without orders at the commencement of the battle, was taken prisoner by the enemy. He had been wounded early in the action, yet he remained in the field. His guns met the first shock of the Ghazis. He was unhorsed in the rush. A ferocious fanatic raised his weapon to kill, but an Afghan officer put his sword across the Lieutenant's body and claimed him as his prisoner. He was raised from the ground, surrounded, and taken away to the ranks of the Afghans. He was kept a close prisoner until the month following, when the battle was fought which decided Ayoub Khan's fate. What the tragic end of this splendid young officer was, shall be told in the next and final episode of the Afghan war.

Major Blackwood of the Royal Horse Artillery died on the field of Maiwand. He was wounded early in the action. He retired to have his wound dressed ; he returned to his duty before the enemy, and resumed command of his battery until he was again wounded and subsequently killed. This conduct, was what I should have well known that



Major Blackwood would carry out ; for I was personally acquainted with him—indeed I had known him from his youth. He was as perfect a specimen of the British soldier as this country could produce ; he was every inch of him an amiable and good-hearted gentleman. He was a man of a noble nature ; an experienced and high-minded officer.

His sorrowing relatives had the satisfaction of feeling, as some alleviation of their loss ; that he died as he had always lived—doing his duty to his country with that self-sacrificing spirit which was one of his chiefest characteristics. Would that all, could leave this life so loved and so greatly respected.

Lieutenant Osborne, remaining by the side of his gun, resolved to never desert it ; he was there cut down and killed. He surrendered his young life as a brave man should before the enemies of his country. He was a promising and much-liked youth. He fell regretted by all who knew him.

A party of officers and men of the gallant 66th Regiment who had retained some sort of cohesion, retired surrounded by a maddened and ferocious crowd for some distance, losing men by shots at every step. They had with them the colours of their regiment. At last, about a hundred reached a small walled enclosure in a village some distance from the field of battle. Into this they dashed, and determined to hold it to the last man. They did so ; and this is the way these heroes showed the Afghans how British soldiers can fight, even in disaster or defeat. They stood close together with bayonets fixed and arms at the charge. Up rushed the Afghan force. They crowded around and enclosed the place. The British soldiers fired slowly and with good aim, for the supernatural calmness of desperation was now upon them. An enemy fell killed at every shot. The whole Afghan army at last



stood around in witness of such a sight of undaunted resolution to die rather than surrender. The Afghan host shot quickly and but too surely, for by twos and threes the gallant soldiers fell.

Amidst the heap of slain, at last stood an officer and ten men. With a loud shout these rushed out of the entrance and amongst the enemy, who gave way a short distance from their onslaught; but no opening did these eleven men perceive, for the serried ranks of the Afghans were on every side. The Englishmen placed themselves back to back, and coolly fired their rifles. One by one, amidst the admiration of those who slaughtered them, they fell to the earth, until the last man stood there in the presence of all; unyielding, stern, and resolute. A shot struck him; he gave one defiant look around, and dropped dead upon the bodies of the comrades who lay at his feet!

It is by the evidence of the fierce yet admiring enemies who destroyed them, that we are enabled to tell how these men died.

In this enclosure fell the already twice wounded Major Blackwood, Royal Horse Artillery.

Lieutenant-Colonel James Galbraith was last seen on the bank of the nullah, kneeling on one knee, with a colour in his hand, officers and men rallying round him; and on this spot was his body found.

Here, too, fell Captain William Hamilton McMath, a gallant soldier, and one who would, had his life been spared, have risen to distinction in Her Majesty's service.

Near this spot fell Lieutenant Harry Outram Barr, shot dead over one of the colours.

Captains Ernest Garratt and Francis Cullen were killed on the field in front of the nullah; up to the last moment giving their orders with as much coolness as if on ordinary regimental parade.

Amongst those killed in the enclosed garden where the last stand was made, were Captain Walter Roberts, Lieutenants Maurice Rayner, Richard Chute, Walter Ogilvy, and Arthur Honeywood. The two last were last seen in the act of holding up the colours, the pole of one being shattered to pieces by bullets. Lieutenant Honeywood was shot down whilst he was holding a colour high above his head, and shouting "Men, what shall we do to save this?"

Let the way in which all these undaunted men gave their lives for their country speak for itself; for surely no comment is needed.

The loss in arms, stores, and baggage was enormous. Everything which accompanied the British force fell into the hands of their enemies, and those who survived reached Kandahar in what they stood upright in only.

The consternation at Kandahar, upon receipt of the news, was fearful. All the troops which were in and around the city were called into the citadel. This was placed in a state of defence and every preparation made which was possible under the circumstances, for holding the place to the last man. But the inhabitants left the city in the wildest confusion, and at the same time their property to the mercy of all the thieves and vagabonds in the neighbourhood, rather than stay and be murdered or robbed by the ruffians who accompanied Ayoub Khan.

Of what followed upon these preparations, and the result, I will make known when relating the battle which sent Ayoub back to Herat in hot haste, a defeated and disheartened man.

The public distress in England upon receipt of the intelligence of this great disaster and disgrace was great, for the first telegram announced that the whole force of General Burrows had been completely annihilated; but soon news came that detached parties had begun to come

into Kandahar, and that some further portions of the force still remained alive to reach the city.

Eleven hundred officers and men were killed, wounded, and missing, of which nine hundred and sixty-five were killed outright. Three hundred and thirty-eight camp attendants were killed and wounded in addition. The number of guns captured by the enemy was seven out of the twelve engaged.

It has been placed on record by the evidence of officers of Ayoub Khan's army, taken prisoners at the battle of Kandahar, and by a letter from Ayoub himself; that on witnessing the unexpected march of the British force, the surprise of the Afghan army was complete, as it would appear that it was not their intention to attack General Burrows in his former position, but rather to avoid coming to blows until satisfied of success. On witnessing the advance of the British towards them, and of their evident intention to attack; also upon seeing the strength of the General's force, the Afghan commander stopped his march across the front of the British, and determined to overwhelm them. He therefore wheeled his whole force, formed his order of battle, brought forward his guns, and commenced his enveloping movement.

It took some time to bring his right flank up into line; but so soon as this was in proper alignment, the final advance was made which swept all before it.

General Burrows says in one part of his dispatch, that a victory might have been gained if the companies of Jacob's Rifles had remained firm; yet in another part, he says that the Ghazis and Afghan infantry came on in such overwhelming numbers that the British force was totally unable to check them.

In truth, he must have well known, when writing this dispatch, that a firm resistance by the small force which he

had brought out into the open plain in full sight of an Afghan army which he himself admits numbered at least twenty-five thousand men with thirty guns, would have been almost useless ; that his flanks were surrounded at the very outset ; that his rear was already reached by the enemy's cavalry ; and that the whole of his troops had at the moment of the final attack been severely tried by over three hours' fearful fire from the enemy's artillery and cavalry ;—that, in short, he had brought his small force into a position in which they could do nothing else than passively endeavour to repel an assault in the open, by a force outnumbering it by ten to one, and discovered to be so only at the very moment when first caught sight of.

That initiative which is the essence of war was lost, and Maiwand was Isandhlwana repeated.

Some months after this disastrous battle, two officers who had been in the engagement, were brought to a court martial on the gravest of charges. Their names were Colonel Malcolmson and Major Currie.

These officers were acquitted ; and they are still in Her Majesty's army.

Upon this decision, the British officer who was unfortunate enough to involve his country in so much disgrace and loss of life dropped out of all prominence in public affairs ; but his name will be well remembered by many a sorrowing family in Great Britain and India.

The intention of these pages is to relate deeds of heroic bravery which have won a well-deserved distinction for those who performed them ; it is not to hold up any name to public obloquy. The British public is ever forbearing to an unfortunate or fallen man, notwithstanding he may by his acts have caused suffering and loss. With Englishmen generosity and forgiveness for the past, follows the first burst

of indignation ; and although confidence cannot be restored, the individual is never hounded down to the earth.

So will it be with Brigadier-General Burrows—yes, even by those who suffered through the terrible loss of fathers, sons, brothers, and friends, will he be forgiven, although he will not be forgotten ; for it will be remembered that he was not entirely to blame for that catastrophe, which, so far as he was concerned, was the result of an error in judgment—to which all are liable. Right-minded men will go farther to seek for the primary causes which led to so much disaster and disgrace to England.





## CHAPTER XV.

### MAJOR WHITE 92nd HIGHLANDERS AND THE LITTLE GOORKHA AT THE BATTLE OF KANDAHAR.

AYOUB'S POSITION NEAR KANDAHAR—ARRANGEMENTS TO RELIEVE THE CITY—SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS ORDERED TO KANDAHAR—SORTIE FROM KANDAHAR—THE MARCH FROM KABUL—KANDAHAR REACHED—BATTLE OF KANDAHAR—MAJOR WHITE AND THE LITTLE GOORKHA—DEFEAT AND FLIGHT OF AYOUB—MURDER OF LIEUTENANT MACLAINE—CAPTAIN STRATION KILLED—ABDHUL RHAMAN (ABDHURRAN KHAN) RECOGNISED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT—END OF THE WAR.



It is an almost universal axiom in military warfare, that a serious disaster necessitates a still more serious effort to retrieve it, and to save a nation from its consequences ; and it not unfrequently happens that in order to effect this, a vaster sacrifice of life and treasure has to be made than that which followed upon the occasion of the original misfortune.

The whole of Afghanistan from end to end became in a



state of the highest excitement upon the spread of the news of the affair at Maiwand. Numbers of discontented and plundering chiefs took up arms to swell the ranks of the victorious party, while numerous tribes, ever watchful for the opportunity of harassing the British and sweeping down upon isolated posts and travelling convoys, commenced their old practices of rapine and murder.

Ayoub Khan rapidly advanced to Kandahar by the Arghandab valley, and took up a position north of the city, for the purpose of a regular investment, and, if possible, rapid capture of the place ; or, of driving out the British who had taken refuge within its walls and fortified citadel.

There can be no doubt that at the very moment at which he approached Kandahar, division of opinion took place amongst those chiefs who had joined him. Ayoub himself, would have been for masking the city and pushing in for Ghazni and raising the Ghilzais and other tribes in the vicinity ; and, by preaching a religious war, thus endeavour to drive out the infidel from all the country, and at the same time send back the new aspirant, Abdhul Rhaman (Abdhurran Khan) to Turkestan. Others with him, were for looting the city and destroying the British force within it.

Ayoub's army, made up as it was of several tribal contributions, each with its own particular aim, formed a heterogeneous mass difficult of control. All were fierce and without cohesion. So it came about, that many, so soon as they had fairly invested the city and its environs, began to ill-use, rob, and maltreat the inhabitants of the different villages scattered over the face of the country. Some, with the plunder which they had collected, at once made the best of their way to their homes ; yet others, excited by the hope of a share in the coming spoil, began to come in and take part in the operations about the city.





ENTRANCE TO THE KOIAK PASS.

It would appear, that those who were for the investment and capture of Kandahar before proceeding further, prevailed; for Ayoub, powerless without their aid, was compelled to sit down before the place in almost regular form of siege; at least in complete investment, as numbers of spies in the employ of General Phayre who was in command of the lines of communication with India through Quetta, were turned back by the besiegers while engaged in efforts to penetrate to General Primrose at Kandahar, with messages from the former officer.

From Kandahar, through the Kojak and Bolan passes, almost to Quetta itself, the whole of the tribes which inhabited the country were thoroughly aroused, and many at once commenced to attack outposts, attempted to seize the passes, and to do all they could to interrupt the lines of communication, so that no reinforcements should pass to Kandahar. From Kandahar to Ghazni, marauding chiefs began to assemble their men to join in a regular warfare, and to take their share of what was to be got out of it. Indeed, from Herat to Kabul, and from thence to India, the news travelled, and excited visionary hopes of either aggrandisement or power. In fact, the position of affairs for a short time was very critical. Yet, as it always is, when the Britisher is beset with difficulties; his spirit—his bull-dog tenacity of courage, rises with the power of his enemies to harm him. His natural determination of mind comes to his help, and causes him to meet the threatened storm with undaunted mien; and to burst, with the strength of some mighty giant, the iron band which seems to encircle him with terrible pressure.

No sooner had the tidings reached head-quarters in India, than, foreseeing its effects, instant efforts were made to repair the disaster. Orders were telegraphed to Bombay that a considerable force was immediately to be sent towards

the line of the Bolan and Kojak passes for the purpose of pouring in reinforcements to the besieged ; and Sir Donald Stewart was directed to assemble a force at Kabul, place it under the command of Sir Frederick Roberts, and send it, viâ Ghazni and Khelat-i-Ghilzai, to Kandahar, with the object of relieving the city and retrieving the misfortune at Maiwand. General Phayre, in command of the communications with Quetta, made excellent dispositions to secure the Kojak and Bolan passes, keep down the rising tribes, and provide and send forward ample provisions for Sir Frederick's coming force.

With the promptitude and firmness which characterizes the race of Englishmen when having to meet untoward circumstances, it was decided to take a step generally considered adverse to success and dangerous as a military operation. It was settled that Sir Frederick Roberts should advance along the front line from Kabul to Kandahar as rapidly as possible, and that he should cast off all reliance upon his base of operations at the former place and press forward unsupported, and in a manner isolated, to attack Ayoub and relieve Kandahar.

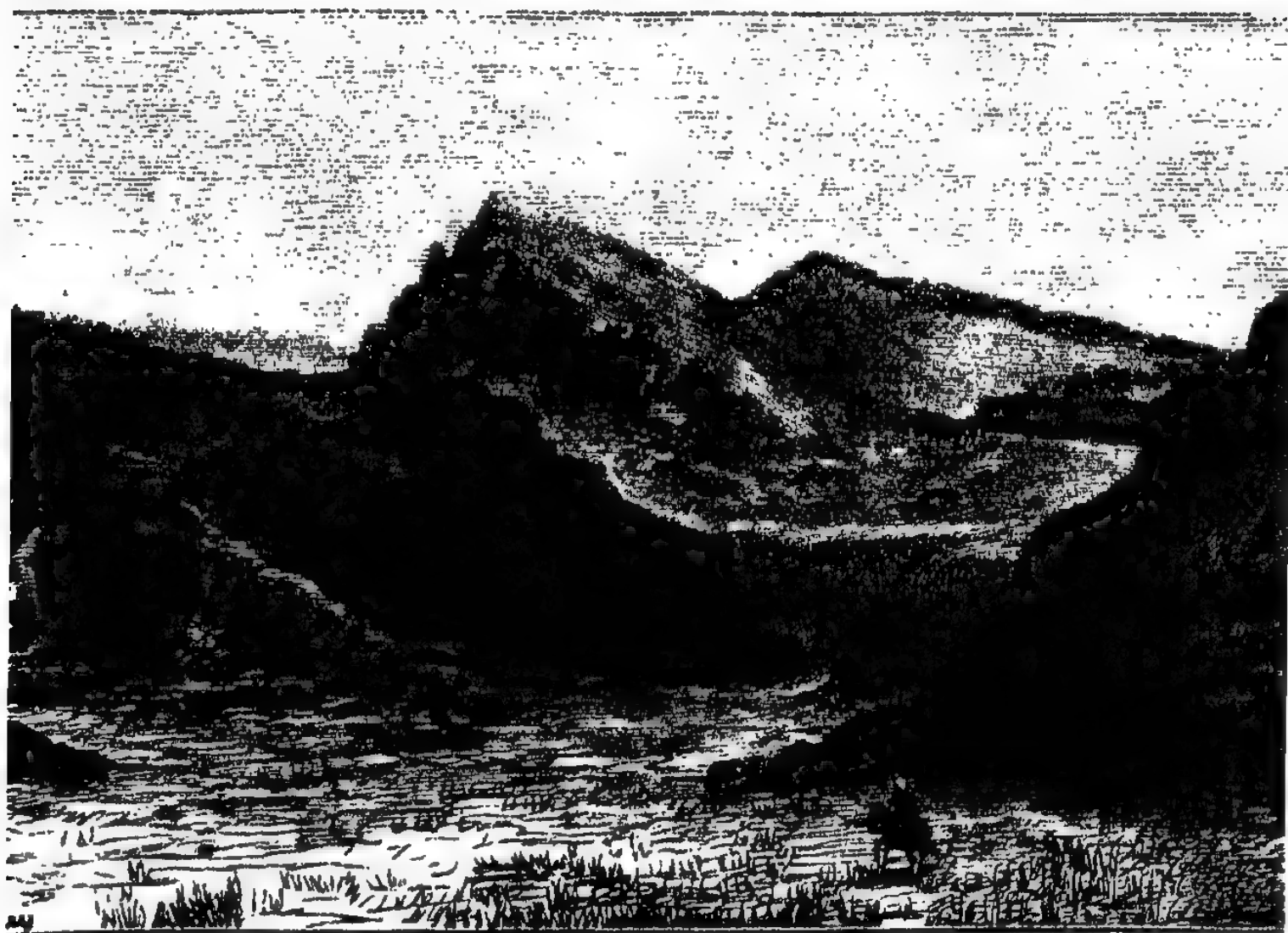
The lost initiative was once more to be regained, and that by one of the most brilliant marches which military history would have to record !

The masterly details of this equally masterly march cannot be related here. Suffice it, that they were multifarious and exact to a degree that reflected the highest credit alike upon the devisors and executants who were engaged in carrying them out.

Sir Frederick Roberts was the first to move forward to the support of Kandahar, and on the 9th of August, 1880, his lithe and wiry form, mounted upon his Arab charger, could be seen, accompanied by his staff and escort, taking his place at the head of the column for the relief of the beleaguered city.



HEAD OF THE BOLAN PASS.







As Sir Frederick sat his horse a little in advance of those who were about him, for a few moments his keen blue eyes looked from beneath the peak of his white helmet upon the assembled force before him. It was a little army of which any general might well be proud. From rank to rank the General passed in his inspection, and as he did so, he saw lines of well-bronzed and determined-looking faces of hardy and well-seasoned British soldiers inured to warfare amongst some of the fiercest races in all the world. He rapidly scanned the features of Sikh and Goorkha, many of whom had fought under his command before, and who knew right well that his lead was to victory. These men's eyes flashed with pride as he passed them, for they had learned to respect him. They were pleased once more at having been selected to follow him to success, and thus to increase their own renown.

The stores were packed, the horses and mules patiently were waiting for the order to move off, and all was ready for the final and the greatest episode in the whole of the Afghanistan war.

The inspection ended, the General drew his charger on one side. A quiet order. The galloping of an Aide-de-camp from brigade to brigade. Arms brought from the order to the shoulder. The flashing of lines of steel, as the bayonets came up into the sunlight. The trotting forward of the advance guard of cavalry. Then every column faced to its right in the formation of fours, and in silence the head of each company turned to its left towards the entrance of the Logar valley, on its way to the closing scene of nearly two years' active warfare in a stern and rugged country filled with enemies of a character for every species of implacable mischief, and wily to a degree that required every faculty, mental and physical, to be exerted to its utmost for the purpose of keeping them in control.

The entire force with which Sir Frederick undertook the duty assigned to him was, British troops, 2,562 ; Native soldiers, 7,151 ; British officers, 273 ; with eighteen mountain guns, carried on mules.

But while arrangements were thus being made, things were going on badly with the British at Kandahar. Mistakes were repeated, and more valuable lives were uselessly sacrificed.

By a series of movements, Ayoub Khan's army got completely round the city, and occupied all the villages about it ; thus cutting it entirely off from all communication with the rest of Afghanistan. He then tightened the cordon of investment by possessing himself of the hamlets closer to the place, and therein constructed in the night-time, behind the mud walls which surrounded them, numerous small batteries from which he could pour a fire upon the city and its approaches. So soon as General Primrose perceived this, he determined to make some endeavour to ascertain the dispositions of the enemy, and if possible, to widen the lines of circumvallation.

With this view he ordered a sortie to be made on the 16th of August, upon the village of Deh Kojah, about three miles to the eastward of the city.

The principal reasons which have been given in General Primrose's despatch which related the events of the sortie, are, that he was desirous of keeping open the regular road from Kandahar to Mundi Hissar, leading to General Phayre on the line of communications to Quetta, and which ran through this village ; at the same time he wished to ascertain what number of guns Ayoub had in position, and their description.

The citadel held provisions and stores for thirty days. General Primrose must have known well that the news of the defeat at Maiwand had long ago reached head-quarters,

and that active measures would be instantly taken to send forward assistance with ample means for his relief should Ayoub remain in his position ; and that the necessary help would be rapidly sent on. His reasons for deciding upon this sortie were undoubtedly insufficient to warrant it. Therefore it was made upon bad judgment, and led to needless sacrifice of life and another defeat, that only increased the enemy's confidence and drew the bonds around the city closer than ever. It would have been far better if General Primrose had devoted his whole mind to perfecting the defence of the city and its surroundings, and not have let himself be led away by false conclusions. He might have known that either General Phayre or any other General who came to his assistance would be certain to attack Ayoub vigorously, and that in conjunction with this General, he could help in utterly defeating the Herat Prince. Nothing adequate to the sortie could be gained by it ; as if taken, the village could not have been permanently held by the small force at General Primrose's command.

The sortie upon the village of Doh Kojah was therefore a mistake.

Early on the morning of the 16th four guns and two mortars opened upon the village to cover the advance of the infantry, while three hundred cavalry were ordered to leave the city by the Eedgah gate and trot round to the east of the village to await the result of the attack, and pursue the enemy if driven out.

At five a.m. two small parties of infantry debouched from the Kabul gate of the city and made for the south end of the village, while a third party remained in reserve at the gate. As soon as the two parties approached the village, they were received with a heavy fire from numbers of the enemy who evidently held it in strength, and at the same

moment a considerable number of Ghazis made their way across the open ground beyond and rapidly advanced towards the village. These were at once seen by the cavalry, for a troop of the 3rd Sind Horse, under Lieutenant Geoghehan, trotted forward, intercepted them, charged, and dispersed them in every direction. After this, the troop formed up, once more took its station with the rest of the cavalry, and waited for another opportunity to charge.

Again, however, did another large body of Ghazis collect and try to run across the open towards the village for the purpose of assisting in its defence; but Major French, with his party of the 19th Native Infantry now close to the place, received them with two or three well-directed volleys which caused them to hesitate, when General Nuttall, again in charge of all the cavalry, charged and scattered them over the field. Major French with his men then rushed into the village, and for some moments carried all before him.

Brigadier General Nuttall re-formed his men after the charge, and soon received by the hands of a mounted orderly a note from General Brooke, in command of the whole attacking force, requesting him to cover with his cavalry the retirement of the infantry from the village to the Kabul gate.

The cavalry therefore came round, covered the retreat which had been ordered, and entered the city by the Kabul gate instead of that from which they had advanced. In carrying out this order from General Brooke, the cavalry lost heavily, as they were compelled owing to the nature of the ground, to keep close formation and receive thus the whole of the enemy's fire, who now recommenced a rapid attack, and followed quickly.

It would appear, however, that previous to this order from General Brooke, the infantry, notwithstanding a severe

fusilade from behind the mud walls of the village, had penetrated nearly to its extreme end, and were then ordered to withdraw.

It is certain that this sortie reflected no credit upon those who devised it. It resulted, in a military point of view, in absolutely nothing; while the loss of life it entailed had but a poor compensation in the remembrance that such was the fact.

General Brooke and 223 officers and men killed and wounded for no actual result, and for an object that was all but aimless or unnecessary, was not calculated to impress those engaged in the defence with the best of opinions as to the nature of the undertaking.

In the retirement from the village, an officer, Lieutenant W. St. L. Chase, and a private of the 7th Fusileers named James Ashford helped to carry a wounded soldier out from under the fire of the enemy, to prevent his falling into their hands and being cut to pieces. Both officer and private received the Victoria Cross for this act of humanity.

After this, the besieged appear to have settled down into a steady defence until help came from without; and it was not long in coming, for on the 15th of August, Sir Frederick Roberts had reached Ghazni, ninety-eight miles from Kabul, after only seven days' march. Khelat-i-Ghilzai was reached on the 23rd of August, 134 miles from Ghazni, in eight days' further progress. Kandahar was now but eighty-six miles distant, and Sir Frederick, being anxious that communication by heliograph should reach General Phayre as quickly as possible, sent forward two cavalry regiments to Kohat, thirty-four miles further on, and pushed on the remainder of the troops half way.

On the 26th of August, at the village of Tirandaz, Sir Frederick received news that Ayoub Khan had evidently been informed of the rapid advance of the British force



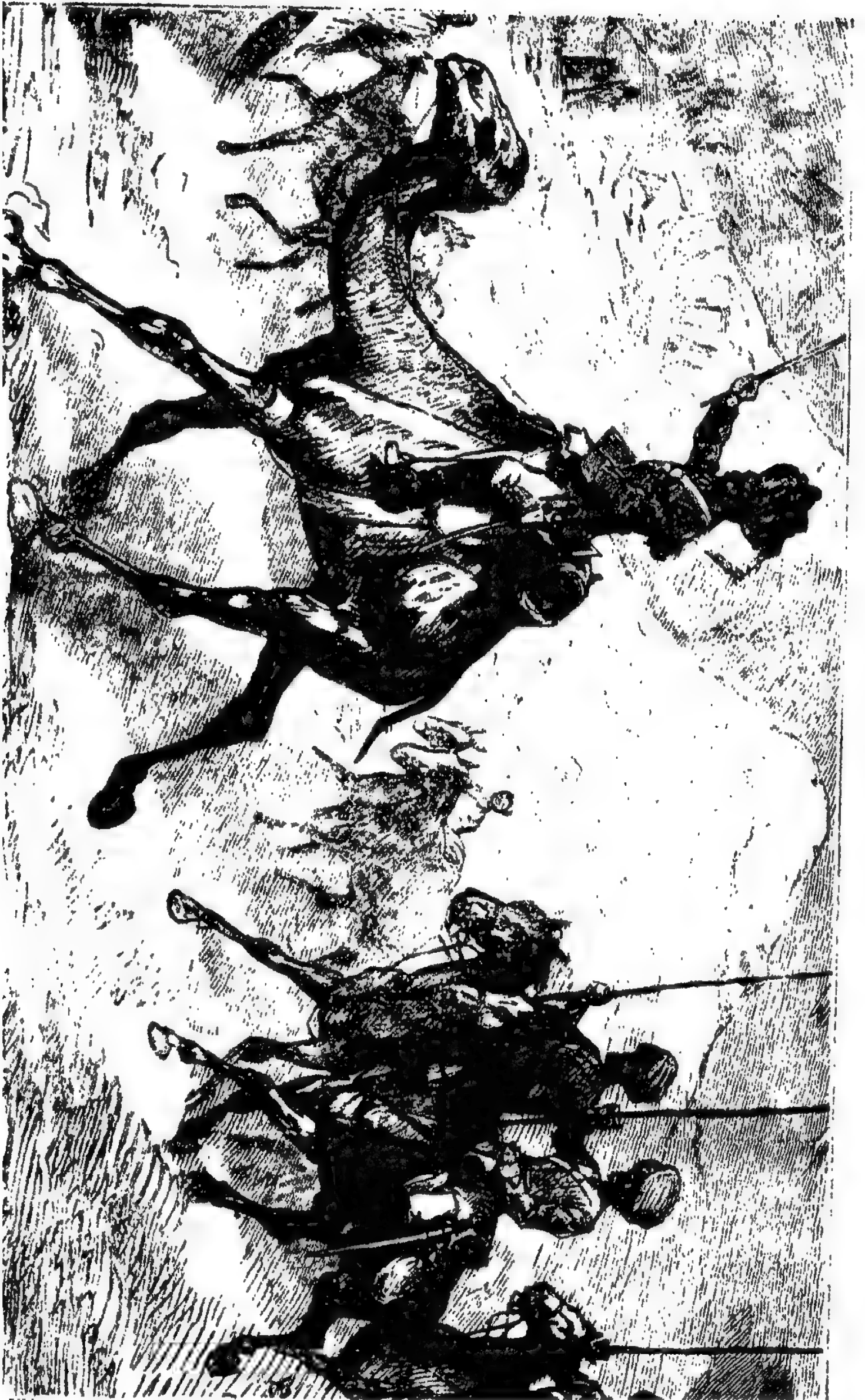
from Kabul, as he had abandoned all the villages to the east and west of Kandahar, and on the 24th had struck his camp and taken up a position in the valley of the Arghandab river, between the Babi Kotal hills and the village of Mazra, exactly north of the city.

Then the gallant Sir Frederick advanced and encamped close to the city of Kandahar on the 31st of August, having rested his men one clear day at Khelat-i-Ghilzai, in the meantime having been informed that a division under General Phayre was within a few marches of the cantonments. The entire distance of three hundred and eighteen miles had been done in twenty-two days. A splendid performance indeed.

The British troops arrived at Kandahar in the highest perfection of strength, and in the best of spirits for the coming encounter with Ayoub. They were animated by one feeling of anticipated victory. They were confident of their powers for success. They were well aware of their leader's talents, and would obey his directions to the letter.

By all this, the necessary initiative required for all well-conducted military operations was in full play, although no blow was yet struck at Ayoub. Its effect was at once apparent, for divided counsels immediately reigned supreme in his camp.

Ayoub himself wished to at once retire beyond Ghirisk on the way to Herat; but numbers of those chiefs who had joined him and fought against the British, feared the result of their acts, and begged him not to withdraw his Heratee troops and forsake them. He reluctantly determined to remain and stand the result of the coming attack; but numbers of his large army had slunk away from him and back to their villages, upon hearing of the approach of the British, fearing a heavy visitation for their acts of rapine. Therefore





Ayoub's numbers in the battle which took place on the morrow were not more than sixteen thousand men all told.

The celebrated march of the army of Sir Frederick Roberts from his base of operations was carried out with the most careful forethought, and with the most exact calculations as to the powers of endurance of men and animals. In short, the General knew his officers and soldiers. They understood what he required from them, and responded to his slightest wish. As British soldiers they were possessed of one united will, and that will was to them, the deed already accomplished.

It has been said in England that money was spent to secure the co-operation of the Ghilzais along the line of march, so that they might not interfere with its progress. This I, for one, do not believe ; for Sir Frederick Roberts, in his report of the march and upon the conduct of his troops who conducted it, states in the frankest manner, that he quite expected considerable resistance from the tribes in the neighbourhood of Ghazni. In fact, he prepared to meet this, to overcome it, and to teach these tribes a still more terrible lesson than that which Sir Donald Stewart had done in his march from Kandahar to Kabul. No attacks were made upon Sir Frederick Roberts' column, as the Ghilzais had not yet forgotten this lesson or its consequences to them.

No sooner had Sir Frederick Roberts arrived at Kandahar than with that promptitude which is so characteristic of him, he directed a reconnaissance in strength to be made of Ayoub's position to the right of the Babi Kotal, while he himself reconnoitred the position which the enemy had taken upon the top and face of the hill, and of the pass through it. He found that the Babi Kotal was too strongly fortified to be taken in front without great loss of life ; and the result of General Gough's observations in

his reconnoissance around the spur upon the right of the hill, justified him in coming to the conclusion to carry Ayoub's entire position by one of his well-prepared flank movements.

Looking from the Afghan position towards the British camp, it was formed as follows :—A ridge of hilly country called the Babi Wali Kotal was on their left. This hill was held by a large force of infantry, and had been well strengthened by placing in advantageous positions a number of guns which commanded all its approaches. The right of the Babi Kotal trended downwards into some lower ground, and upon the slopes of this, in the villages of Gandizan and Gandi Mullah were placed strong bodies of infantry supported by cavalry and by guns placed in entrenchments.

It was clear that the enemy expected a determined attack upon their position on the morning of the 1st of September, 1880, as the entire hill-top seemed alive with Afghans, and several additional guns had been placed there in position, and in the villages on its right slopes were seen large numbers of men moving into position amongst the orchards and enclosures which intersected the country.

The enemy anticipated that preparations were about to commence for the attack, for soon after daylight, a desultory fire was opened from the villages of Gandizan and Gandi Mullah, and an ill-directed fire was aimed upon the British position from the top and face of the Babi Kotal.

The British formed up into their brigades under the protection of some low hills in their front, and as they marched into their alignment, they were in the highest spirits. They took up the positions of their battalions with a springy step. All looked full of confidence. In each man's eye was the brightness of expectant victory. On that day, there was not one amongst the Kabul field force as it formed up for the attack, but did not determine to show Ayoub Khan and his







Afghan array, that well trained British soldiers properly handled, could carry all before them.

Sir Frederick Roberts' plan of battle was his favourite movement of making a show of force and false attack in front, while he turned the position by a flank assault.

The disposition and direction of the march of the attacking bodies were as follows :—

The remains of General Burrows' force and the Kandahar garrison were told off to threaten the Babi Wali hill and its pass ; guard the approaches to the city in the direction of the enemy, and be ready for a counter attack from the pass.

Then the whole of the force which had marched from Kabul, was detailed to assail the villages upon the right slopes of the enemy's position on the Babi Kotal. For this purpose these troops were arranged thus :—

Brigadier-General Daubeney's brigade was to hold the ground from which the two attacking brigades advanced.

The cavalry was ordered to the extreme left of the British position to work well forward to the enemy's right as the attack was developed, so that the line of their retreat to Ghirisk and Herat should be threatened. General Gough, who commanded the cavalry, had with him some guns and infantry to act at the proper moment as he might direct.

General Macpherson with his brigade was to attack the village of Gandi Mullah Sahibad on the end slope of the Babi Kotal and force his way on to the village of Pir Paimal on the spur of the hill beyond Gandi Mullah. General Baker with the second brigade was to advance on General Macpherson's left, just touching that General's brigade with the right of his own.

At about 9.30 a.m. all was ready. The 40-pounder guns of the Kandahar force opposite the Babi Kotal opened upon that hill, and in a few moments the two brigades could

be seen threading their way over the top of the rising ground in their front.

The leading regiments of General Macpherson's brigade were the 92nd Highlanders and the 2nd Goorkhas. Each regiment vied with the other in the ardour of its advance, the one determined not to be outdone by its neighbour. Their skirmishing lines and supports dashed forward in brilliant style. They rapidly covered the intervening ground, and were quickly fighting in the enclosures of the village of Gandi Mullah, and forcing before them those who defended it. The enemy fought stubbornly, but the Highlanders and Goorkhas pressed on and thrust the Afghans back further and further, finally finishing the capture of the village by a rough charge with the bayonet. Many of the enemy made a stand here to receive this final charge, but it was useless. They were sternly driven out, or killed fighting to the last.

During the advance of this brigade, that on its left under General Baker, in a fine line of attack, forced its way through the lanes and enclosures which lay in its progress and drove back the enemy at every step. Each enclosure and every by-way was filled with Afghans, but gallantly did the brigade fight its way forward. The resistance here was most determined, yet nothing could stop the onward progress of the brigade. The leading regiments here were the 72nd Highlanders and the 2nd Sikhs, the latter a splendid and renowned native regiment. Many times both regiments had to fix bayonets and carry the enclosures by assault. The Sikhs repulsed with the bayonet alone, a most determined charge upon them by a large force of the enemy, and again came forward into fighting line with the 72nd, driving their enemies before them.

After severe fighting along their entire line of progress, both brigades emerged at Pir Paimal on the point of the

hill slope which ran down from the right of the Babi Kotal. This village was at once assaulted and carried in fine style about one p.m., after about three hours' continual fighting; the attack upon the whole position having commenced at about ten a.m.

Then the two brigades swept round to their right and forced the enemy from all the wooded gardens and orchards which covered the commencement of the hill slope opposite to that which faced the British position. They now began to work along the rear face of the Babi Kotal, at the foot of which lay the camp of Ayoub Khan in the Arghandab Valley.

The capture of Pir Paimal, and the swinging round to their right as soon as they reached there, brought the troops near to the rear of the Babi Kotal pass. The brigade, which had been stationed on the ground from which the advance was made, was therefore now ordered forward in support of the two others, for the purpose of assisting them to retain the position they had so well gained; but before the brigade had far advanced, General Ross, who commanded the two brigades which had carried the villages; with a fine judgment, instantly determined to carry his advantage home, and give the enemy no time to rally. He knew his troops. They were flushed and excited with victory, and would be denied nothing. He ordered them to press on firmly. His order was well obeyed. As the men formed up in the village of Pir Paimal for the final rush, the General perceived that the position to which the Afghans had retired was an entrenched camp just round the spur of the Babi Kotal. It was evident that they intended to hold this last defensive post with their usual determination, and that it would be necessary to at once carry this by storm, as the enemy were hurrying into it reserves and reinforcements.

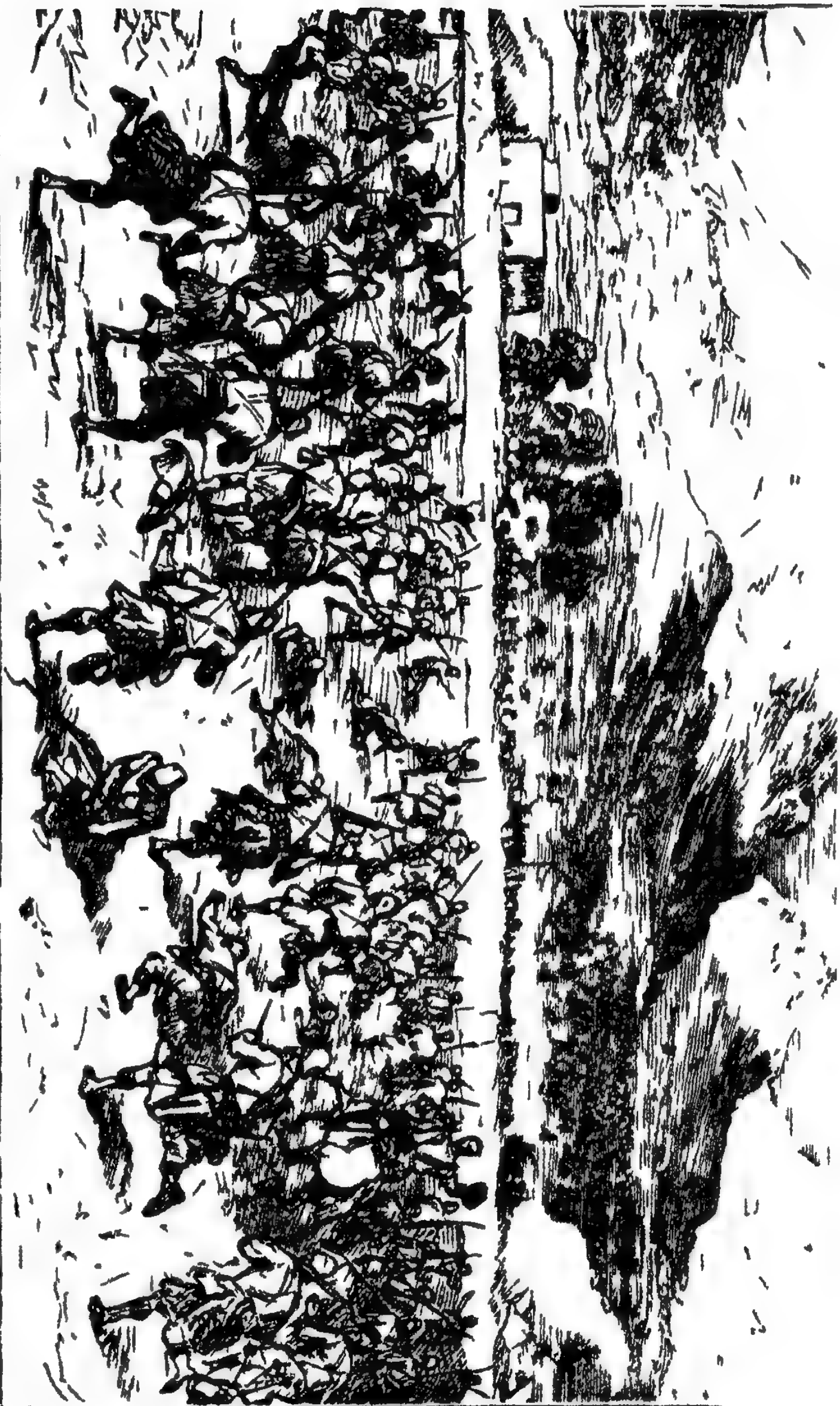
Major White, a gallant officer, led the advance companies of the 92nd. With soldierly instinct he saw the necessity for a rapid rush and no denial. He called to his men, "Just one more charge, lads, to close the business!"—A tremendous cheer! and with a quick run across the intervening open with bayonets fixed, and supported by a portion of the little Goorkhas and some 23rd Pioneers, the gallant Highlanders swept forward, and in a few moments were over and into the entrenchment, amongst the guns and enemies who were defending it.

The ever foremost Major White was amongst the first over, accompanied by a little Goorkha. As the Major reached the nearest gun, this man was by his side. Placing his rifle upon the gun, the Goorkha looked up to the stalwart British officer and called out in Hindostani, "This gun is captured in the name of the 2nd Goorkhas, the Prince of Wales' own regiment." His name was Sepoy Inderbir Lama. He was afterwards well rewarded for his excellent courage.

A hand-to-hand combat with the bayonet ensued for some minutes within the entrenchment, but additional infantry came up, and the Afghans were soon streaming out of it in flight over the undulating ground beyond. The brigade on the left of General Ross had kept well up in the line, and sweeping forward, had fought down all opposition, had carried orchard after orchard, enclosure after enclosure, finally capturing three guns placed in position to sweep their approach.

The enemy were now disorganized and in rout. Those who had remained on the Babi Kotal in anticipation of an attack there, retreated so soon as they found the British approaching their rear, and now General Nuttall was ordered with the Kandahar cavalry to push through the pass and pursue the enemy along the Arghandab river towards Ghiriskh. Brigadier-General Gough was also directed to get





BATTLE OF KANDAHAR — THE 92ND HIGHLANDERS CHARGE THE ENMIES





upon the enemy's line of retreat, and cut them up as they were flying in the direction of the river Helmund.

Now once more advanced the two front brigades together, and at about a mile beyond they observed the entire camp of Ayoub standing deserted, and just as it had been left in the morning when the Afghans had moved out of it to take up their positions for repelling the British attack. With the deserted camp was captured the whole of Ayoub's artillery, numbering thirty-two guns, which had been left to their fate by the flying enemy: these included the two which had been captured from the Horse Artillery at the battle of Maiwand.

A sad sight awaited the first of those who reached the deserted camp; for, just outside the entrance to a tent, was discovered the still warm body of the unfortunate Lieutenant Maclaine of the Royal Horse Artillery, who had been taken prisoner at Maiwand. He was lying on the ground with his throat cut. He had but just been brought outside by his guards and cruelly murdered.

This crime would stamp Ayoub Khan with everlasting infamy, if it could be proved that he was responsible for it. It is, however, very doubtful if he ever gave orders for its execution. It is most likely that the fierce men who guarded the unfortunate Lieutenant, suddenly, at the moment before flying, made up their minds to kill him. He was a young officer of great promise. His sad fate caused universal sorrow amongst that army which found his dead body.

Twelve hundred of the enemy were killed and wounded in this battle. Forty killed and nearly three hundred wounded was the total of the British loss. It has been estimated that the number of the Afghans engaged was about 16,000 men all told.

Several of the most renowned and experienced British officers and soldiers lost their lives in this engagement;

amongst whom was Lieutenant-Colonel Brownlow, commanding the 72nd Highlanders, who had highly distinguished himself on many occasions during the whole war in Afghanistan, notably at the Peiwar Kotal, and in the operations around Kabul at the latter end of the year 1879.

Here fell also Lance-Sergeant Cameron, a grand specimen of the Highland soldier. He was shot while gallantly heading his company in a charge to the left of Pir Paimal.

Here also died Captain Frome, a gallant and energetic officer.

General Ross, so soon as he had secured his final success, sent Captain Stratton of the 22nd Regiment, the superintendent of army signalling, to proceed with a company of native infantry to the Babi Kotal, for the purpose of sending by signal the information to Sir Frederick Roberts. The gallant officer sped forward upon his mission ; he had gone but a short distance, when a Ghazi, springing up from a ravine near, aimed with his rifle and shot the officer dead from his saddle.

I must here quote the words used by Sir Frederick Roberts respecting this valued officer :—"In Captain Stratton, Her Majesty's service has lost a most accomplished and intelligent officer, under whose management army signalling, as applied to field service, reached a pitch of perfection probably never before attained. His energy knew no difficulties, and his enthusiasm was beyond all praise. He had won the highest opinions from all with whom his duties had brought him in contact, and his death was very deeply felt throughout the whole force."

Of such as these, were the British officers and soldiers who fought in Afghanistan ; and there were no exceptions, for all were brave. Errors of judgment in conception, or in the execution of an order, all are liable to ; with the English

public, these are allowed for and borne with in a patient spirit.

Ayoub Khan fled with the utmost speed back to Herat, accompanied by a small body of cavalry, having lost his entire army by death or dispersion.

So long as the British remained in Afghanistan his power was utterly broken. A terrible lesson had been at last taught to him and his followers, which they were never likely to forget.

By this battle the war in Afghanistan was virtually over. Abdhul Rhaman, the new claimant, was in a short time formally recognised by the British Government of the day, and orders were given for the withdrawal towards India of the whole of the British troops which remained in Afghanistan.

A severe contest in both Houses of Parliament took place respecting the evacuation of Kandahar; such a step being deemed by many experienced political and military men of Great Britain and India, to be dangerous to the present and future security of our Indian territory.

This little volume cannot go into the political or military reasons which caused that city to be ultimately handed over to the new ruler; suffice it to say, that it was given up to him, and that Ayoub Khan has once more endeavoured over the same ground to raise the different tribes in his favour. He has again led a body of troops against those of his relative. His troops but recently fought with those of his cousin which had been sent out to meet him. He was defeated through the treachery of two of his own regiments, and he has retreated to Persia.

Afghanistan is yet in an unsettled condition; but let us hope that whatever betides—let us fervently pray that whoever may be the ruler of that country, he will not, through the intrigue or interference of the power which is

rapidly extending its territories to the confines of India, ever cause the whole work to be done over again, by a repetition of the vast expenditure in blood and treasure found necessary through the events which caused the Victoria Cross to be won in that inhospitable region.

The gallant Major White received his well-merited distinction for his splendid lead in this battle, as well as for other acts of bravery during the war. According to the formal words in the official gazette, "for conspicuous bravery during the engagement at Charasiab on the 6th October, 1879, when, finding that the artillery fire failed to dislodge the enemy from a fortified hill which it was necessary to capture, Major White led an attack upon it in person.

"Advancing with two companies of his regiment from one steep ledge to another, he came upon a body of the enemy strongly posted, and outnumbering his forces by about eight to one. His men being much exhausted, Major White took a rifle, and *going on by himself*, shot the leader of the enemy. This act so intimidated the rest, that they fled round the side of the hill, and the position was won.

"Again, on the 1st of September, 1880, at the battle of Kandahar, Major White, on leading the final charge under a heavy fire from the enemy, who held a strong position and were supported by several guns, dashed forward and secured one. Immediately after, the enemy retired."



# The Victoria Cross

ON,

## The Frontiers of India.

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### CHAPTER XVI.

#### CAPTAIN SCOTT AT QUETTA.

THE TOWN OF QUETTA—SUNSET AT QUETTA—THE EVENING DRILL—SUDDEN ATTACK BY AFGHAN COOLIES—CAPTAIN SCOTT RUSHES TO THE RESCUE TO HIS BROTHER OFFICERS—TERRIBLE FIGHT IN THE BARRACK SQUARE—DEATH OF THE AFGHANS.



N the north-western boundary of Beloochistan, and close to the Afghan frontier, stands a town which, soon after the incident now related, acquired a strategical significance of the highest importance in future military operations towards Afghanistan.

Quetta is the name of this town; and so soon as the trouble with Shere Ali the Emeer of Afghanistan began to assume a serious aspect, it was at once seen by the Govern-



ment of the day, that Quetta would form a most favourable point for the concentration of British troops should it become necessary to advance into the Emeer's country towards Kandahar. Here it was that troops and stores of all kinds could be massed ready for an immediate move forward, so as to immediately secure the Khojak pass in their front and thus become possessed of a serious obstacle to their passage; while at the same time Quetta would command the celebrated Bholan pass in Beloochistan. By holding this town with a sufficient force at the outset, two most important passes could be quickly obtained, and a line of operations be laid open without a severe sacrifice of life; thereby enabling the British to strike for Kandahar before the Emeer could organise adequate means of opposition.

From Bombay troops and munitions could be taken by rail to the Indian border next Beloochistan and soon reach Quetta, which would thus form a valuable additional base of supplies to that of Lahore, the principal.

Altogether, Quetta was an admirable position for the British to occupy in anticipation of circumstances, as, without it, the Afghans could have closed the Khojak pass, while that of the Bholan would at least have been insecure.

The importance of Quetta in view of certain contingencies being early seen, arrangements had been made with Beloochistan for the British to hold the place in sufficient force.

Some foolish men of this country, ever anxious to carp and quibble at acts of Governments, but more for the purposes of seeing their names in print in the public journals, than for any abstract reason; and notwithstanding that it was obvious to minds less obtuse than theirs, that the possession of this small place would cause a vast saving of serious military operations and of a severe loss of life, and at the same time secure an excellent line of advance to such an important city in Afghanistan as





Kandahar—these short-sighted men, then, loudly called in question the holding of Quetta.

It is most satisfactory to be able to state, that the Government of the day held its ground; and after events proved alike the justification of this Government and the wrong-headed ignorance of those whose pratings, if listened to, would have involved this country in a serious sacrifice of blood and treasure.

It was at Quetta that Sir Donald Stewart and General Biddulph concentrated and afterwards continued from thence their march to Kandahar and its contiguous country; and so rapidly did these excellent generals advance, that the enemy had not time to secure the rugged Khojak. Therefore, with one or two comparatively unimportant engagements, Kandahar was occupied, and a great military movement was satisfactorily completed.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was evening. The Indian sun looked like some vast fiery globe of gold, as it was about to disappear behind the line of distant hills which lay to the west of Quetta. From this glowing orb a glorious light shone over the whole of nature's surface. The mountain points seemed tipped with streaks of liquid fire. The hill-sides radiated with a lustrous gleam of refulgent splendour. Colours of richness deepened in the valleys below, to hues of warmth that threw upon the foliage tints of gorgeous beauty. The wild birds warbled their final notes before they sought the branches of neighbouring trees for rest; amidst the sounds of which could be heard the sharp bark of the jackal, as it woke from its daily slumbers and began to prowl around for its nightly prey. Afar off, against the mellow sky, could be seen huge vultures, as, high in the heavens they flew in silence to their haunts of darkness, to resume at early daybreak their ravenous hunger in distant spots.

The glorious sunset of an Indian climate was just at its close, on the evening of the 26th of July, 1877, and beautiful nature seemed to be seeking repose until once more aroused by the morning's light.

Within the low houses which formed the barrack square at Quetta, the troops were terminating their evening's drill. The loud tones of command had almost ceased, as the men of each regiment drew up into ranks for dismissal to their quarters, when suddenly a great outcry was heard, and a rapid running of human beings was observed across the square.

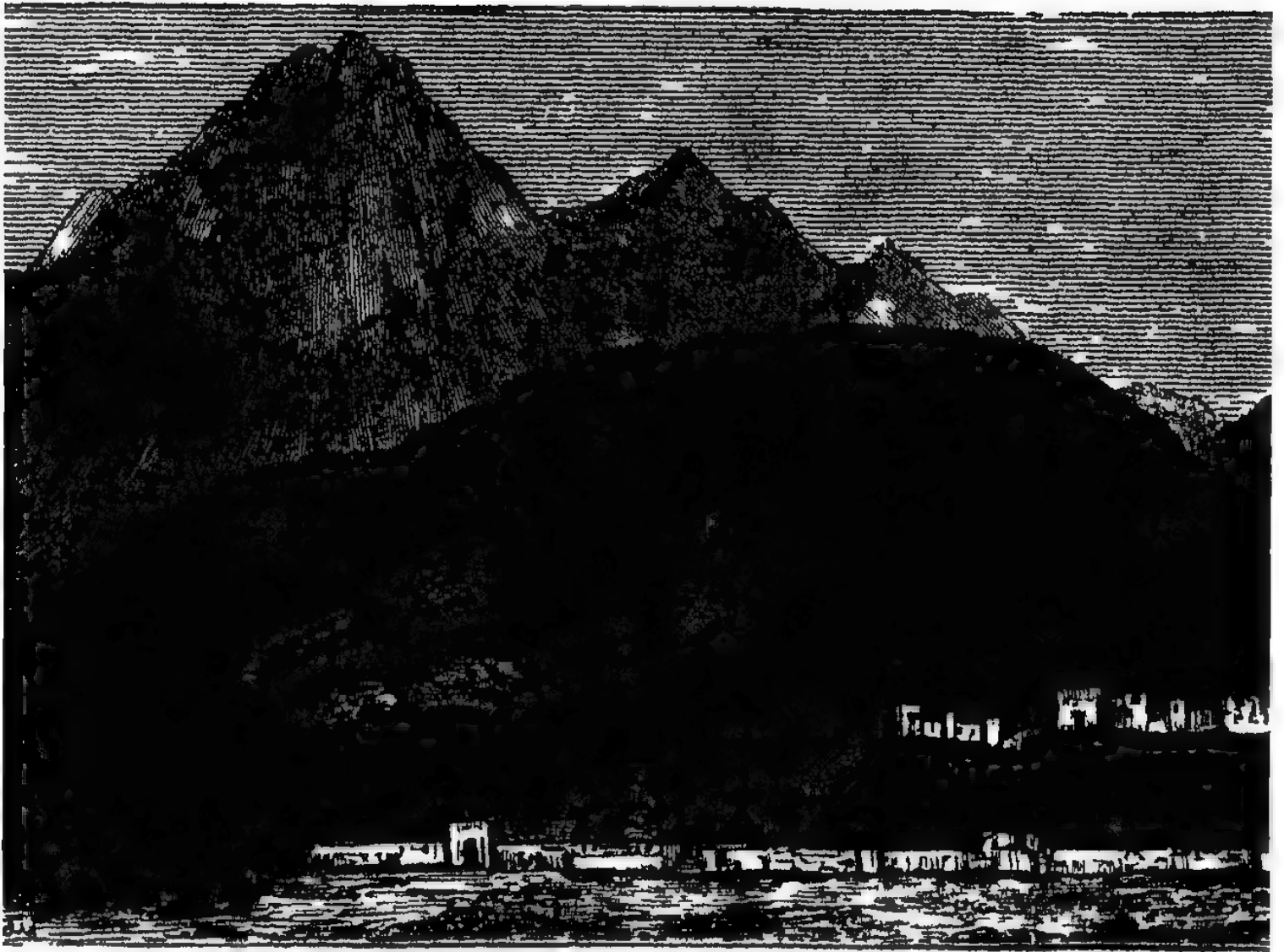
Shouts and cries were intermingled, and all eyes were directed to the spot from whence they came.

Towards the end of the barrack square a struggling mass of men could be seen, and, with swords flashing amidst the air, in fight.

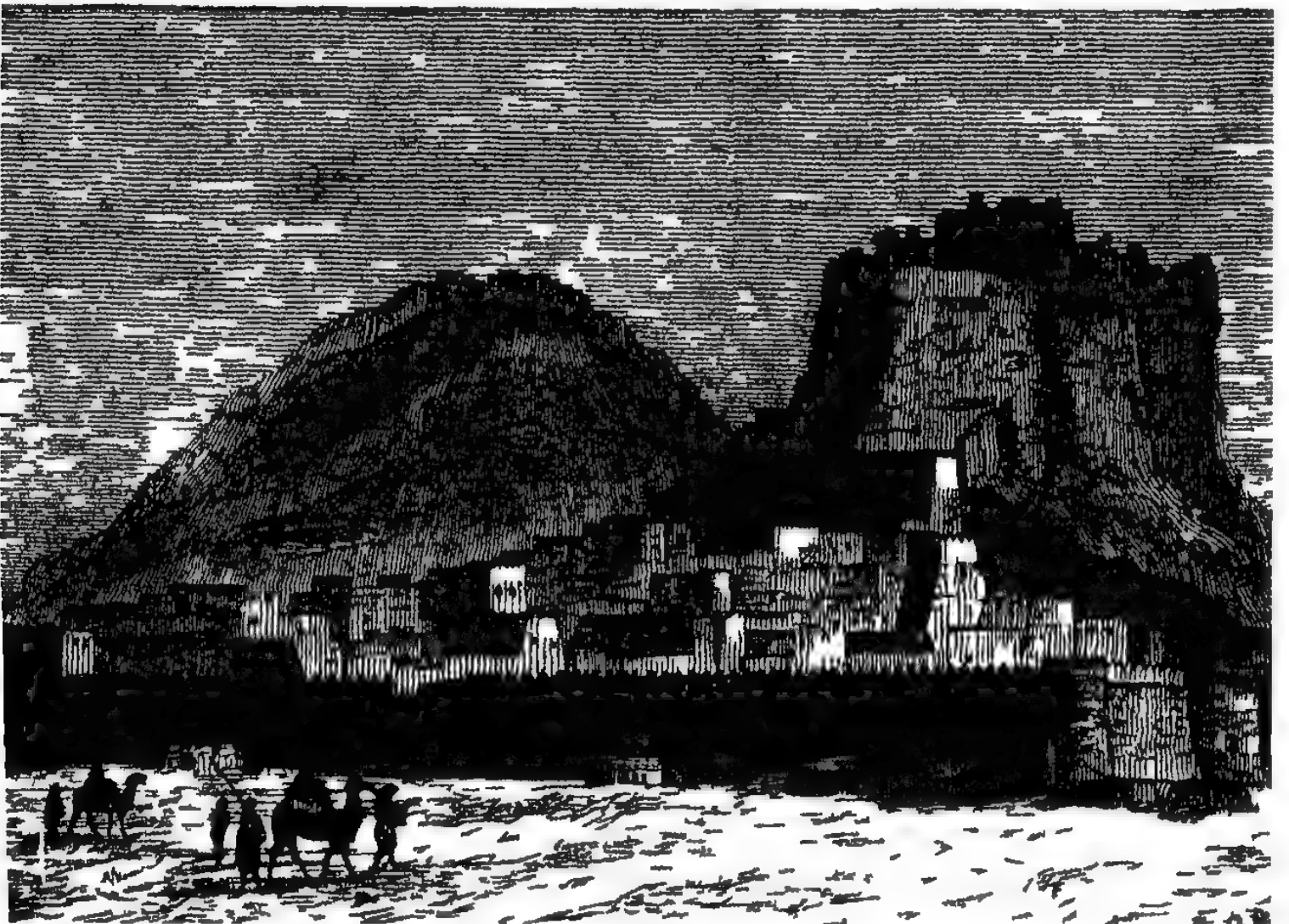
At the other end of the parade-ground stood Captain Scott of the 4th Sikhs, who was just in the act of his last drill evolution, when some native soldiers came swiftly towards him calling out that British officers were being killed!

A glance towards the other end of the square showed this gallant officer that a serious event was happening there. He drew his sword and rushed towards the spot where the weapons were gleaming in the fading sunlight. As he ran, he threw away this weapon, and snatched from a Sikh soldier a musket with bayonet fixed, and sped onwards with rapid steps. He reached the struggling men, when, to his astonished eyes, he saw an English officer on the ground, dead, but still bleeding from a dreadful sword-cut. The body was that of Lieutenant Hewson of the Royal Engineers. Around the fallen man, and about yet another officer, Lieutenant Kunhardt, also of the Royal Engineers, was a party of Afghan coolies with swords and long knives drawn, ferociously cutting at this young





QUETIA.







man and at a brave Sepoy who was endeavouring to defend him. The Sepoy's name was Rachpul Singh. The Lieutenant was already wounded. He was staggering backwards step by step, faint and exhausted, but still defending himself with his sword. His life hung upon the action of a moment. That moment came, and with it Captain Scott of the Sikhs.

The rapid steps of this officer were heard as he swiftly ran towards the party. Another instant and he was amongst and scattering the men composing it from side to side in the impetuosity of his rush.

A bayonet thrust, a vain attempt to parry it, and an Afghan fell mortally wounded by Captain Scott. A cut was made at the Captain's head by another Afghan near him. He sprang aside, and the Pathan's weapon cleft the air. With a quick movement Captain Scott turned and drove his bayonet into the Afghan's body. The splendid Sepoy who was defending Lieutenant Kunhardt now redoubled his efforts. He stood fixed to the ground with determined front and pointed his weapon right and left.

A powerful Afghan who saw his two companions fall by the Captain's bayonet thrusts, rushed upon him knife in hand, but the active officer closed with the man and grasped with powerful tenacity the hand which held the blade. A terrible struggle ensued, and both in their efforts rolled over and over upon the ground; the one endeavouring to strike, the other to preserve his life and overcome.

Some men of the Captain's regiment quickly came running up, and instantly perceiving their officer's danger, released him by despatching with their bayonets the man who so furiously sought his life.

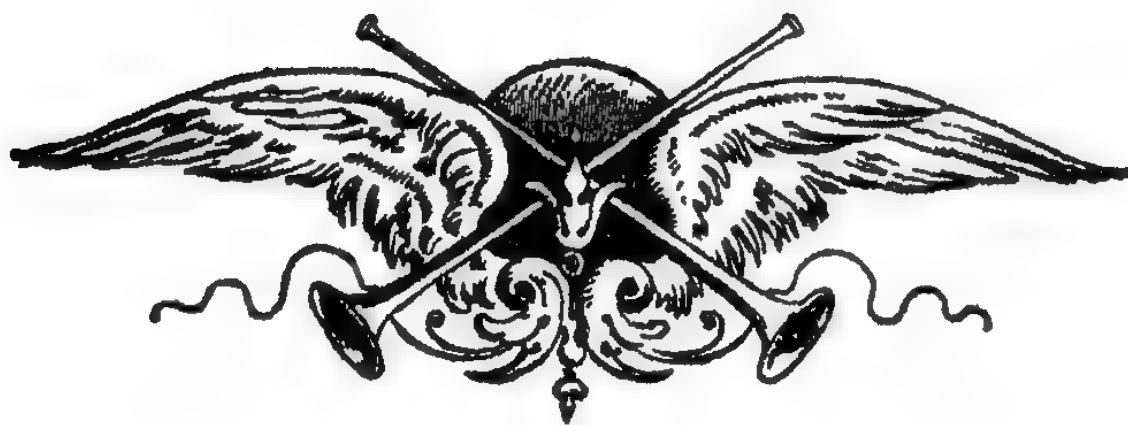
Now, these men attacked the remaining Pathans, and found it necessary to destroy them all. They had without apparent reason sought the lives of two British officers.

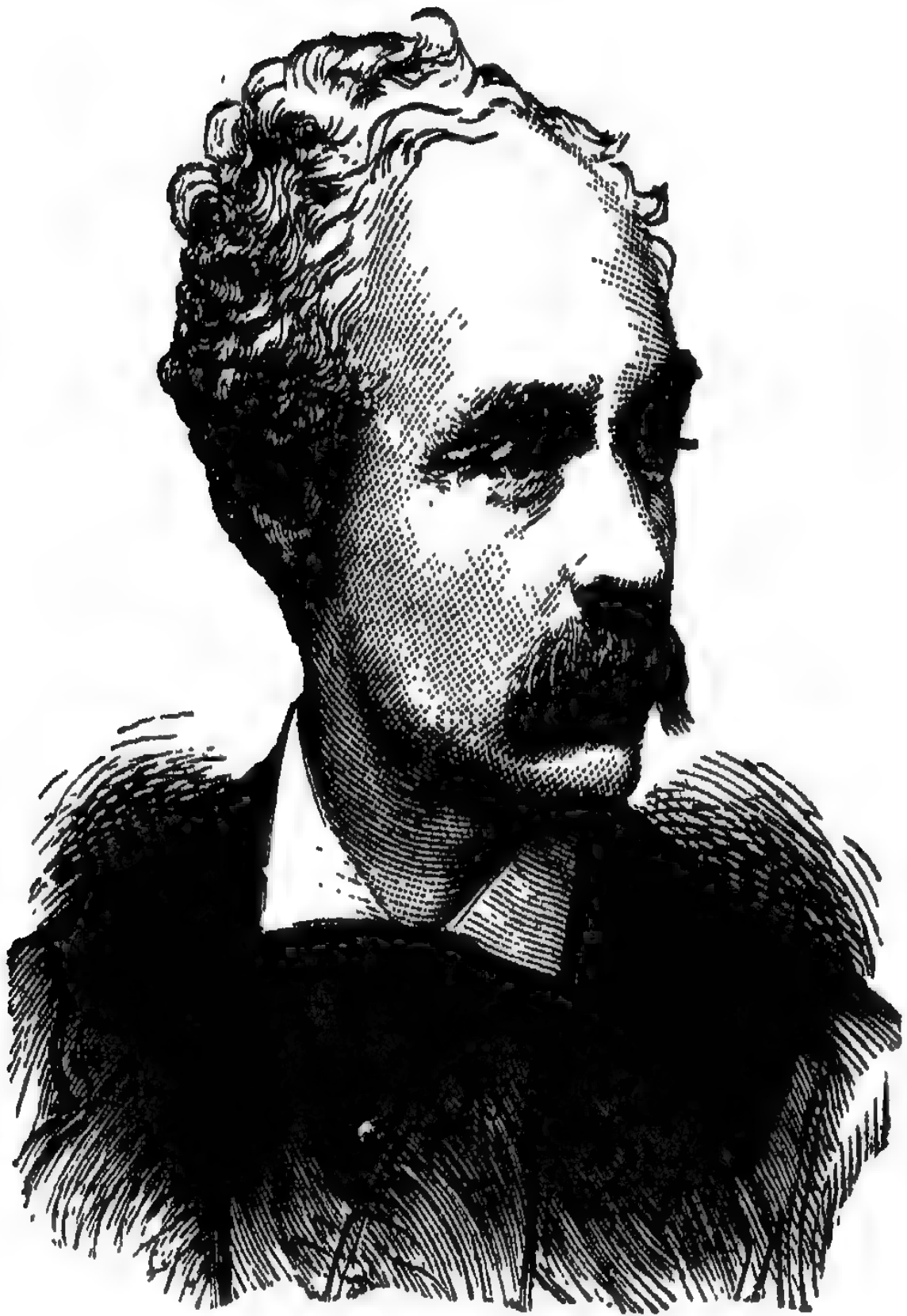
Captain Scott's timely assistance to his brother officer, saved that officer's life by diverting the attention of several of the attacking Afghans to himself, and by his killing two of these with his own hand.

For this act of courage and devotion he received the Victoria Cross, and Lieutenant Kunhardt lived to thank him for a life.

Such as these Pathans, and worse in ferocity, were the men whom the British had the task of overcoming some few months later.

The way they performed their task will be written in history; and history will record they did it well; so well, indeed, that they added lustre to the Crown upon whose service they undertook their duty, while they gained further renown to that country for which they went forth to fight.





**BRIGADIER-GENERAL C. H. PALLISER, C.B.**

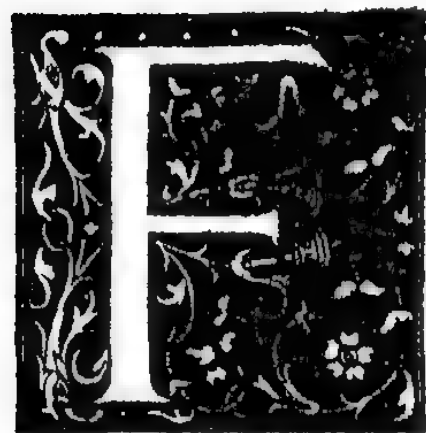
*From a Photograph by Frith, Hastings.*



## CHAPTER XVII.

### LIEUTENANT RIDGEWAY AT KONOMA.

KONOMA—THE NAGAS PREPARE TO ATTACK THE BRITISH—  
THE MARCH TO KONOMA—THE ASSAULT—LIEUTENANT  
RIDGEWAY CALLS UPON HIS MEN TO FOLLOW—HE FALLS  
SEVERELY WOUNDED—THE ATTACK FAILS—NIGHT  
RETREAT OF THE NAGAS.



Far away from the scenes which have been depicted in the foregoing pages—away to the north-east frontier of Her Majesty's Indian territories, the mind of the reader must now be taken. His thoughts must carry him to another picture of Indian scenery even more wild, and to the country of a people yet more uncivilised than the fierce and wily Afghans who so persistently attacked the British forces that occupied their country.

For some period previous to the opening of this tale, a marauding tribe on the north-eastern frontier of India, known as the Nagas, had given serious trouble to the Indian authorities who were located in the district for the protection of British interests. This tribe in one of its

outbursts of fierceness had set upon and murdered the English political Resident attached to the neighbourhood. They had held all representations as to their wanton doings, in utter defiance ; and had made active preparations to assault and capture a British fortified post which was held by some troops at Kohima near Munipore.

The tribe occupied some precipitous country close to the Burail mountain range.

Their principal stronghold was a village called Konoma, situated on the apex of a camel-backed hill at the end of a spur which ran abruptly out from the Burail range and ended in the low ground at the foot of the Konoma position. Here was the place from which the principals of the tribe dominated the weaker and less influential villages, and from which they defied all who attempted to bring them to reason.

No sooner had the most powerful portion of the tribe which had murdered Mr. Damant done the deed, than they at once began to put pressure upon and intimidate the lesser villages around Konoma into sending their contingents for the defence of the place against all attack, and for the purpose of assisting to plunder in every direction in which the British were placed.

So threatening did the attitude of the tribe become, and so difficult was it to get the slightest satisfaction for the murder of the English political Resident, that the Indian Government at last found it necessary to order a small expedition to be undertaken for the purpose of showing the Angami Nagas that they must be no longer allowed to terrorize over the surrounding country.

Brigadier-General Nation was directed to assemble a force and march against the tribe and bring it to reason at once. His little army concentrated at Munipore about the beginning of November, 1879, and, as soon as preparations



were complete, it marched forward to attack the enemy's stronghold at Konoma, disperse its inhabitants, and then force from the tribe such terms as would put a further stop to their depredations and reduce them to order.

On the 21st of November, General Nation pitched his camp within a few miles of the camel-backed hill which rose in his front. In the distance could be seen the long and unequal line of the Burail mountain range, towering even above the point of the steep acclivity upon which was the village of Konoma. The cloud-capped mountain tops seemed to mingle with and be lost in the sky above them.

At 7 a.m., on the 22nd of November, 1879, the whole force quietly assembled in camp, under arms, at about seven miles from the hill of Konoma. A short space spent in personal inspection by Brigadier-General Nation; in filling the men's ammunition pouches, and in other arrangements, and off started the men in excellent spirits for the dangerous work which was cut out for them.

Six miles were covered, and at about 11 o'clock the column halted. One mile now separated the assailing force from the base of the hill, and General Nation went forward to reconnoitre the place and fix the spots from which the assaulting parties were to make their advance.

The General quickly found that he had undertaken a very serious task in the endeavour to capture Konoma. His personal observation soon enabled him to discover that the village which he was to attack was situated in a position of enormous natural strength.

Looking towards the Burail range, the village was upon a peculiarly-shaped hill of great height. This hill was neither circular nor square. It had two steep sides only, which, trending upwards, terminated in a sharply-pointed ridge which ran east and west down to the low ground on

either end. General Nation observed that the principal portion of the village stood upon the north side of the hill, while its detached portion stood upon the southern face.

In order to build the houses, terraces had been cut out of the two faces of the hill; the backs of these houses were built into the cut-away portions of the earth, and at the foot of the front of each row or terrace of houses, the hill-side had been faced perpendicularly to a depth of ten feet or more, and against this perpendicular face stone walls had been made, on the top of which, for defensive purposes, other walls of wood and stone had been raised which ran six feet high in front of each house.

Terrace above terrace rose over the hill-side, each accessible only by a winding lane or pathway cut out from the surface of the hill, and up this, scarcely more than one man at a time could advance. On the apex of the hill was a well-fortified central position built of stone, and capable of holding a mass of defenders who could fire down with impunity upon any one who strove to make his way up the narrow causeway which led through the terraces to the top of the hill. Each line of houses on the hill-side was commanded, and could be swept by a fire from the one above it, and the different positions of vantage were loop-holed for musketry in such a manner as to create a concentrated fire upon the only approach to the terraces.

Besides all this, General Nation could perceive that the Nagas had placed numerous obstacles in the way of an assaulting party, in the shape of well-constructed pangies and other arrangements—in short, that the enemy had used every means in their power to confine the assailing force to a narrow front of attack upon the north side—so narrow, that it would only be by determined rushes up the winding lane against the different barricades placed in it,

the place could be captured, and that these rushes would have to be made against a concentrated fire from behind loopholed walls, roofs of houses, and such like.

On the south, or side facing the Burail mountain spur, the hill was just as precipitous, and equally as strong in natural defence. As with the north side, the top could only be approached by a zig-zag path. Here and there the Nagas had placed every obstacle which their ingenuity could devise, to obstruct any hostile force from getting up the rugged sides of the hill. Where the terraces were broken or unevenly distributed, they had placed numerous wooden and stone barricades. Escarps had been cut in the hill-side. Huge trees had been thrown down with their branches outwards. Sharp projecting stakes had been fixed in the earth and large stones rolled to certain points ready to push down the hill to crush all before them as they dashed towards the bottom.

In all respects the place was practically impregnable to assault, or to any method of capture other than by direct siege with proper cannon to beat down the defences. Yet General Nation had now arrived before the place, and for the honour and *prestige* of the British power, it was necessary that a great effort must now be made for its capture, in order to prove to these Nagas that they could not defy the British authority with perfect impunity.

There were two points from which to assault; the one from the north facing the open country, and that on the south from the foot of the Burail range spur. General Nation made his plans for a direct attack from the open or north side; and having completed his preparations, he disposed his force as follows:—

A detachment of the 43rd Native Infantry under Major Evans, accompanied by Captain Williamson, Inspector-General of Police, was detailed off to take up a position to

the right of the Konoma hill, to assist by their fire the main assault, threaten the valley on the opposite side, and cut off the enemy's retreat to the mountains.

The 44th Native Infantry regiment was ordered to form the front and left attacking party, while Lieutenant Raban of the Royal Engineers was requested to take up a position half way up an adjacent hill, and pour a rocket fire into the village to cover the advance of the troops. Two mountain guns under General Nation were to be posted on another contiguous hill.

As soon as these plans were completed, the Brigadier marched his several parties to their positions of attack. In less than an hour everything was in readiness for the signal. This was to be a commencement of the rocket fire by Lieutenant Raban.

In the village all seemed quiet. Not a man could be seen ; not a sound could be heard. To all appearance the place was deserted. The defenders, hidden behind their ingeniously-constructed stockades and within their loop-holed house-tops, were waiting in silence until they were sure of every shot.

The assaulting parties watched for the sight of the first rocket in its rush through the air. It came not ; for as each was placed in its trough for casting, and its base was ignited, it failed to move. Rocket after rocket was tried, but with no effect ; in fact, the whole of those in Lieutenant Raban's possession had received some injury in transit which rendered them useless.

Then the Brigadier directed the artillery officer in charge of the two mountain guns to open fire. He did so, and instantly a swarm of skirmishers was seen steadily pushing their way up the base of the hill of Konoma. But as the men toiled upwards and closed upon the village toward the upper ground, they came to the terraced walls and their

progress was barred. At this moment the whole village seemed to wake from death to destructive life, for from every point was suddenly poured an incessant rain of bullets, which swept down, dealing death at every step the assailants took. These were compelled to seek shelter at the foot of the stone walls, or to narrow their front upon the only passage to the hill-top and endeavour to force their way up it.

With a shout, those who had drawn towards the pathway rushed forward and dashed themselves against the first barricade. Here a desperate fight took place with the bayonet. The assaulting party eventually partially pulled down a portion of the stockade, drove out its defenders, and, spreading themselves right and left, captured a line of terrace in face of showers of lead from those above.

Still did the gallant men of the 44th, well led by their officers, once more press up the path and again attack and capture a second obstacle, and gain a second terrace.

A short rest, another rush, and another determined bayonet attack caused a third of the upper defences to be in the possession of the British.

Now, seeing the firmness of resolve of their assailants, the Nagas redoubled their fire, and so well was this concentrated, that Général Nation perceived that to force the defences without the aid of artillery would result in a fearful loss of life, and probably without success crowning all the efforts of his soldiers.

The range of the two mountain guns at the hill upon which they were placed, was too long to enable them to have proper effect. The General therefore brought them down and placed them in position at the edge of the village within one hundred yards of the houses and terraces above.

The enemy's defences were too well constructed for these



light guns to batter them down ; and as fast as damage was done by the fire of the two small cannon, the Nagas, in the most determined manner, repaired them in full fire of the attacking force.

A steady cannonade from the two guns, and a rapid fusilade from the positions which had been gained, was kept up for upwards of two hours. The fire was equally as well returned. During this period one more assault was made, but so terrible did the rain of bullets become from the houses and walls which commanded the approach, that it was found impossible to advance in face of it, as every man, so soon as he showed himself in the pathway, was at once struck down, killed, or wounded.

Evening was now drawing near. Fighting had been going on all day, and as yet only one-third of Konoma was captured. The ammunition for all arms was running out. General Nation therefore determined upon one more effort, and gave orders for a final and most determined assault.

Now was once more shown what British officers will do in the moment of supreme danger. Again was seen an example of the English officer facing what appeared to be certain death, so that the orders given to him should be faithfully executed. Duty, the stern watchword of the British officer and soldier, was here again exemplified.

The English officers now placed themselves in front of their parties for the final rush up the path. The Native troops, incited by the example of their brave leaders, formed up under shelter of the stone walls at the foot of the terrace, and prepared to storm the next defence.

Colonel Nuttall\* took post to conduct the advance. Major Cocks stood by his side, sword and revolver in hand.

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\* Not the same officer as he who behaved so gallantly at Maiwand and Kandahar, but a relative, it is presumed.



Near these were Lieutenant Ridgeway, Lieutenant Forbes, and others.

Colonel Nuttall waved his sword above his head, and with a wild cheer, up the steep lane rushed the whole body of men. But a few steps were gained when the gallant Major Cocks and many more near him were struck dead; but the remainder pushed quickly on, and reached the next stockade. Here a perfect stream of fire poured from behind the barricade, from house-tops, and from loopholed walls. Men fell killed or wounded as fast as they came up. Not a man could approach the obstacle which stopped the progress of the assaulting parties. Suddenly Lieutenant Ridgeway bounded forward and called upon his men to follow. He gained the stockade, and tried to get over it. He failed, for it was too high. He tore with herculean strength at the planks which composed it. His men fell fast around him. For some minutes he seemed to bear a charmed life amidst a hail of lead. Then he staggered back and fell to the ground, shot through the shoulder from close quarters; and Lieutenant Forbes, who was endeavouring at this moment to bring up some men to his brother officer's assistance, was struck down severely wounded by a bullet. The stockade could not be carried by assault, and the final attack failed with a serious loss of life; for the flower of the 44th Native Infantry had taken part in it, nearly the whole of whom were either killed or wounded.

All had been done that could be, and nothing now remained but to retain the positions already captured, renew ammunition, and recommence the fight on the morning of the morrow.

The shades of evening were spent in removing the wounded to places of safety and ministering to their numerous wants; and in preparations to proceed to camp

for a further supply of materials with which to begin operations the next day.

The persistent maintenance by the British of the positions which they had won at so much sacrifice, and by their evident preparations to renew the assault more determinedly than ever, impressed the Nagas with the idea that the force below them meant having the entire hill-top, with the whole of the village defences; for, about ten o'clock at night, howls and yells were heard above, and many of the houses were seen to be in flames. Until midnight the turmoil continued, and then all was silence. A tremendous night attack upon the British was at once prepared for. It came not, and at dawn the troops were once more formed and sent at the nearest obstacle. To their astonishment, the men found it completely deserted. Spreading themselves rapidly from terrace to terrace, they discovered that the enemy had evacuated the whole place, had fled in the darkness down the southern slope and gained the upper heights of the Burail range, where they had taken up a position previously constructed, of almost equal strength to that of Konoma.

Here it was not considered necessary to follow them, as in the first place the primary object of the expedition had been gained—that of the capture of the Nagas' principal village and stronghold, and the consequent dispersion of its inhabitants. In the second place, it was well known that before long, those who had fled to the Burail mountains must return and give in their submission or be destroyed by cold and starvation.

Although the assault was in itself not completely successful, such an exhibition of courage and determination had been shown, and so firm did the British commander seem in his resolve to capture the place and disperse the natives, that soon after, as anticipated, the

whole of the Nagas came in and submitted to arrangements for future order and quietness.

Lieutenant Ridgeway became Captain in the army. He was specially recommended for the Victoria Cross for the way he had led the final rush upon the last stockade which was stormed by the troops. He recovered from the effects of his severe wound and received the coveted decoration. This he well earned by a display of conspicuous courage which was amply demonstrated to the brave men by whom he had been surrounded when he won it.

I have recently observed that he has gained a prominent place for admission into the Royal Staff College, Sandhurst.



THE END.













